l'archivio/the archive

a cura di/*edited by*
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FilmForum/2011

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L'archivio
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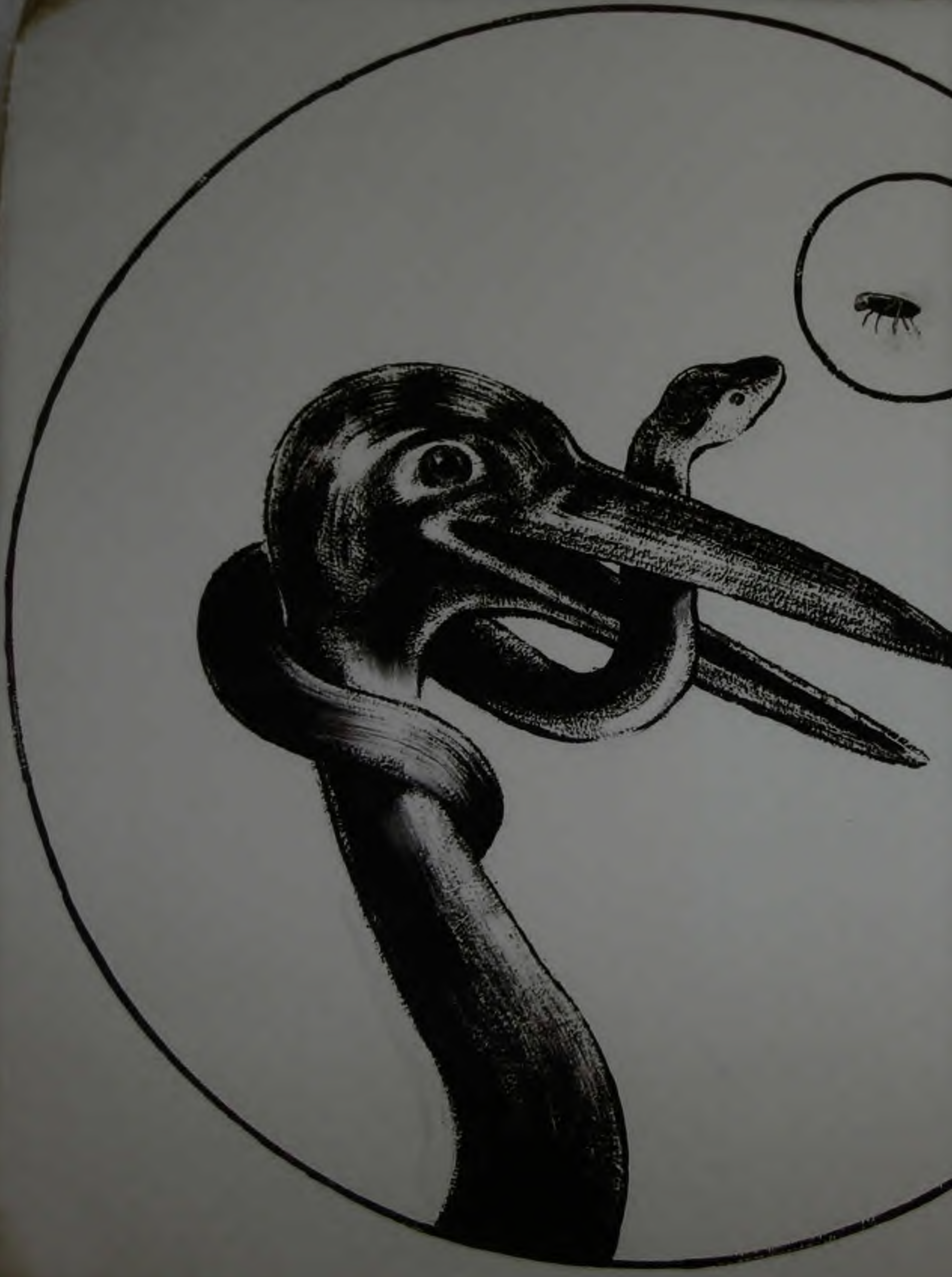

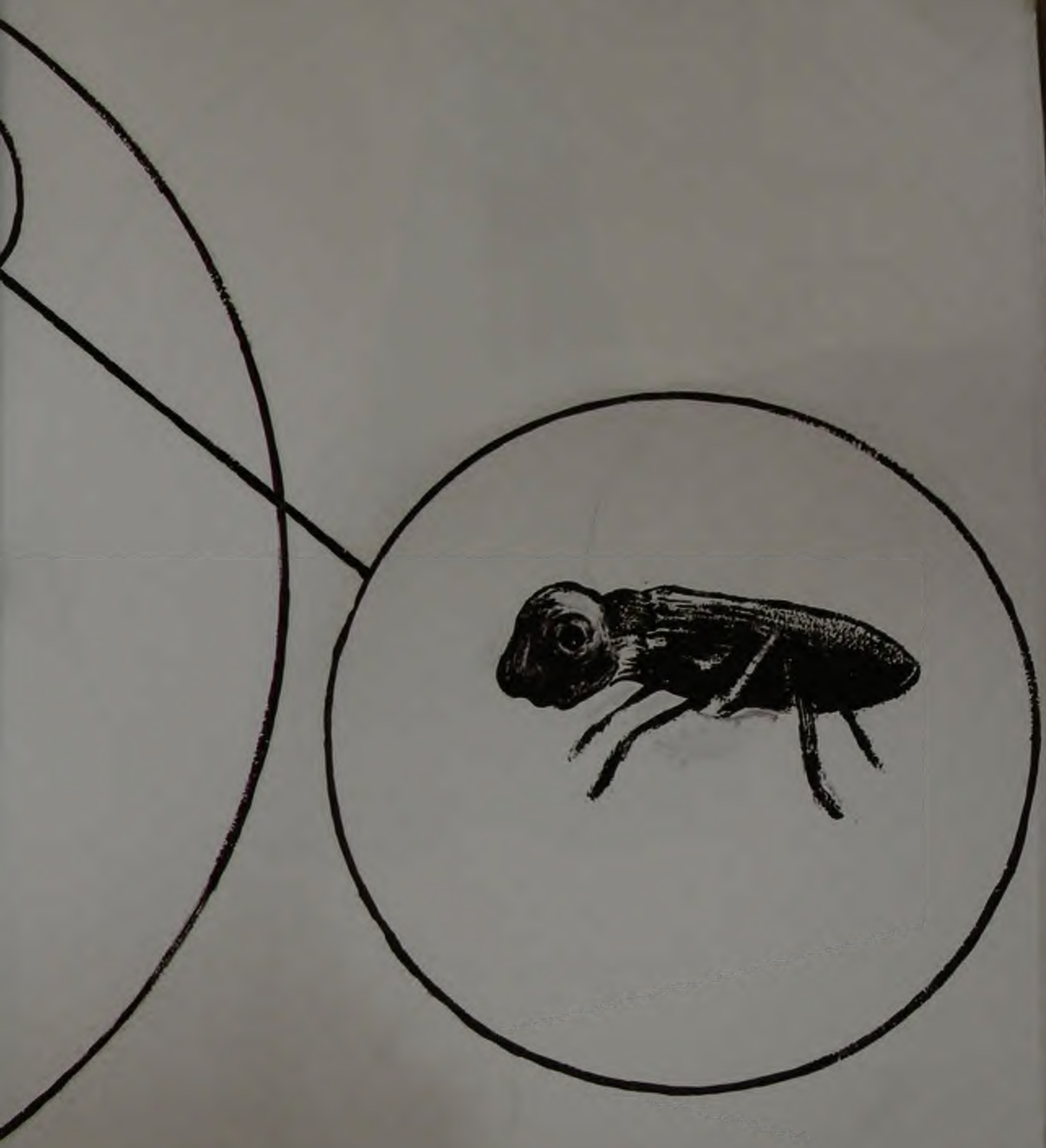

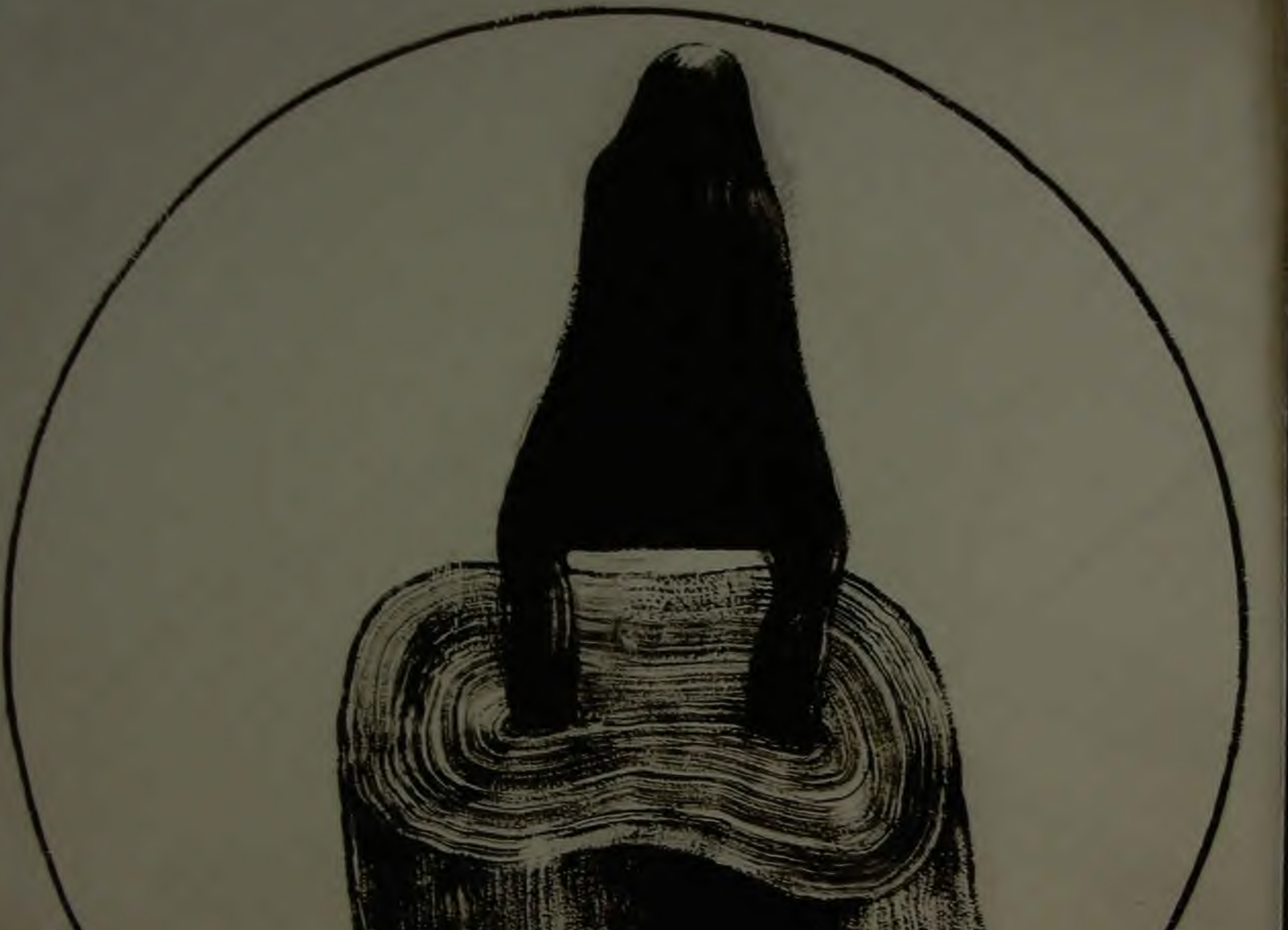

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Preface

The Archive as a system of organization and "canonization" of individual and collective memory enters the philosophical discourse in the late nineteenth-century and the beginning of the twentieth-century (Bergson, Freud, Peirce, Benjamin, and later Derrida), the same period of the emergence of cinematic experience and media culture: "re-membering become a drama between stasis and motion" (Wittmann), the "drama" of motion picture. The issues related to this discourse are outlined in the "Archive, Memory, Subjects" section: how does the subject deal with time dimensions and organize his/her memories relating to past, present, and future? How does this process relate to history and time, technology and machines, movement and duration (Mahfoud), images and sounds? And what roles do silence, obliviousness, and grief play in this process? Bellour recalls the importance of *la douleur de l'archive et du temp* (or *Mal d'archive*) – the dark side of the archive – which relates to the sorrow for loss, absence, death, and the impossible memory (*le souvenir impossible*).

The conditions of possibility of the autobiographical archive of images and sounds are explored (Busetta, Piotrowska, Villa and Panelli) and investigated from family archives (home movies) – that contain elements such as media traces of deaths (Bellour, Monteiro) – to the personal intimate archives (Paci).

From the concept of the archive as an anthropological need for social subjects, which recalls Derrida's idea of *commencement* (principle of Nature or History), the focus shifts to the archive as *commandment*, as institution (principle of law, authority, social order), and more precisely to a particular institutional form of archive, the audiovisual archive. In the audiovisual context, the archive is the institution that has the mission to preserve recorded images and sounds, and regulates and organizes the places and positions of access to the cinematic experience. In the second section, "Archival Practices: Preservation and Valorization," audiovisual archives are considered as actual institutions (film and video archives, *cinémathèques*, film museums, film institutions). In this perspective, the archival practice is outlined as a work on audiovisual materials – mainly film – considered as physical objects and cultural forms (Lenk, Wilkening, Lameris, Virgolin), but also on related documents, such as props, papers and sheet music (Bellano, Holmberg). Moreover, it is also a work of social practices that reveals a *dispositif de pouvoir* and the power relations that it enables and entails (Toffetti).

Archival practices are closely related to technological *apparatuses*, as Derrida pointed out: "the technical structure of the archiving archive also determines the structure of the *archivable* content even in its very coming into existence and in its relationship to the future."[1] The "Archival Technologies" section delves into the ways in which the techniques and methods of preservation, organization, and access to archival materials determine the present existence and the future cultural transmission of audiovisual objects (van den Oever, Sargeant, Hielscher, Turquety, Väliaho).

In the "New Media Archive" section, the technological analysis focuses on the issues related to the contemporary digital turn. In contemporary archive discourse, the shift to the digital paradigm determines a series of open questions, including how the digital archive relates to the analogue archive (Lundemo, Vernet), how the modalities of recording and preservation made possible by digital technologies redefine archival practices (Simoni, Catolfi), and how the organization of knowledge will be remodelled (Keiper). Furthermore, "New Media Archive" analyses the forms and modalities used to access the audiovisual contents through continuous digital *remediations* (Wahl, Trifonova). This section also provokes us to question if the transmission of memory will be guaranteed in the digital domain, and how the conditions of possibilities of collective memory and the documental value of audiovisual footage have been jeopardized or enhanced in the digital era (Bisoni).

"Beyond the Screen: Archive, Art and Urban Spaces" explores the relation between archive and artistic practices in fine arts, video art, and media art. In past years, many artists explored the concept of the archive in different ways: from a juxtaposition of "raw" elements (Noordegraaf) to the shaping of an atlas of images (Tello, Grespi and Violi), archival artistic practices rework both the dimension of time (Guerin) and the dimension of space (Wagner, Pisano, Hanssen), as if a new experience of the contemporary subject is emerging.

Film as an archival "device" is the focus of the last two sections of the book. "Film as Archive" is devoted mainly to theoretical issues concerning cinema's ontology, from an historical point of view (the centenary of cinema recalled by Ramos) to the archival perspective. The cinematic "technological reproducibility" is deconstructed, inquired, analysed (Gaudreault and Marion, Schaber), and finally placed into original dialectical nexuses between the "cinematic form," reality, private memory, and history (Lang, Callus and Lauri-Lucente, Duarte).

In "Archival Footage: Time and Remediation," new technologies and found footage introduce meta-linguistic and inter-textual drifts in the "Film as Archive" discourse, prompting further questions concerning remediation and convergence. Audiovisual as an Archive becomes "*espace de re-création*" (Belloï), a place to re-invent old footages through editing (Fierro) or to re-define film temporal dimension (Bertozzi) that once again stresses the ontological roots of cinematic identity (Space and Time, Word and Image: Grosoli).

Notes

[1] Jacques Derrida, "Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression," in *Diacritics*, no. 25, Summer 1995, p. 17.

Archive, Memory, Subjects

Matthias Wittmann, Institut für Medienwissenschaft, Basel

Inside the Memory: Re-Membering the Archive with Bergson, Freud and Peirce*

Ultimate Archive, Final Cut

If there's an allegorical figuration of what Jacques Derrida would call the *archontic principle* – a "principle of consignation,"[1] the collection of signs tied to the right to interpret them –, then I would suggest to have found them in Walter Benjamin's remembering of his *Berlin Childhood around 1900* (1934). It is well known what I am referring to, but I would still like to reacquaint you with a passage from this text:

> *In my early years, whenever I went for a walk I used to enjoy peering through horizontal gratings. […] during night, when I was dreaming, it could happen, that the table turned and I suddenly became the target of such gazes, glancing out of their basement holes. Gnomes with sharp hats were casting such glances. […] I knew immediately what I was dealing with when I happened one day on verses in my* Deutsches Kinderbuch *by Georg Scherer and read: "When I go down to the cellar / There to draw some wine / A little hunchback who's in there / Grabs that jug of mine." […] My mother gave me the hint. "Greetings from Mr. Clumsy," she would say, when I had broken something or fallen down. And now I understand what she was talking about. She was speaking of the little hunchback, who had been looking at me. Whoever is looked at by this little man pays no attention – either to himself or to the little man. He stands dazed before a heap of fragments. "When I go into my kitchen stove / To make a little soup / I find a little hunchback there / Has cracked my little stoup." Where the hunchback appeared, I could only look on uselessly. It was a look from which things receded. […] Only, I never saw him. It was he who always saw me.*[2]

At issue here is the *little hunchback*, a character from Scherer's songbook that echoes in Benjamin's body memory, where it then conspires with all the other peering gnomes and peeping toms that Benjamin, quite the child in Berlin, felt targeted by as they peered out of cellar windows. Simultaneously prevenient and supplementing, the *little hunchback* is an entity that reaps the moments (as images) by instilling forgetfulness in the observed object – in order to unfurl its life for it as a series of pictures in the darkroom of the last moment. This life's last picture show functions like the "forerunners to our cinematographers," the flip-book: "I imagine that the 'whole life' that is supposed to pass before the eyes of the dying is made up of the kind of pictures that the little man has of all of us. They flash quickly past like the leaves of those stiffly bound books that where once the forerunners of our cinema."[3] In his early mind game movie *The Bridge* (1929), an adaptation of Ambrose Bierce's famous short story *An Incident at Owl Creek Bridge*, Charles Vidor gives us a fascinating, elaborated vision, an impossible insight of this last picture show, when he lets us witness mental images – to be precise: memory images from childhood – that are flashing and closing in as life's last moments in the mind of a soldier executed by hanging "beneath the timbers of the Owl Creek Bridge."[4] The memory fragments flash quickly past and due to their shortness they leave a strong impression and gain the status of pictures (or rather photograms) taken from a flip book (figs. 68-74).

Back to Benjamin's *Lebensbilderschau*: the final cut rests with the little hunchback, this protocol taker and archivist *par excellence*, and *prōtókollon*, the pre-glued page, also means: the file binder. To cite Derrida, one could add the question of the "right of inspection" – *droit de regard* – in the archive (and I will return to this question at the conclusion):

> *The law of inspection is furthermore in itself an authority against which one might revolt. Who has right of inspection over whom? Right, every right, in a certain sense, is right of inspection, every right gives the right of inspection. […] There is no right that does not consist in conferring upon a power a right to control and surveillance and, therefore, a right of inspection […].*[5]

Not only does the *little hunchback* give the observed object the right of inspection only once; this last donation (*Gabe*) of remembrance (*Eingedenken*) is made up of retro-perspectives that the remembering *Ich* never had access to in the past. We are dealing with a *re-membering gaze* that, immediately in the moment of its presence, distorts the past and works through – re-assembles – the collected moments retroactively. The *techné* of the Mnemosyne is what co-writes, co-archives and simultaneously documents itself. Above all, the notion of the *little hunchback* manages to confront the archive's files with the process of inspecting these files. *La prise de vue* meets *la re-vue*, a time of absorption meets a time of use, enabled by a (super-)storage device that truly has its hand – or better said: its thumbs – in the (re-)presentation of the past. It lets re-membering become a drama between stasis and motion.

Archival Obsessions and Matters of Memory

Around 1895, two regimes of recording were implemented in the public sphere that competed with the *little hunchback* from the traditional folk song as well as with one another: film and the unconscious, here considered as a memory that can't be remembered (but can be traced by psychoanalysis). "If the unconscious provides us with a perfect record, the cinema as a prosthetic memory is simply unnecessary,"[6] writes Mary Ann Doane in *The Emergence of Cinematic Time*. The concept of the unconscious as well as the myth of total film (as a total archive) are thus born of the 19th century's archival impulses. While Freud – along the lines of the mystic writing pad (among others) – imagines a storehouse of traces and a multi-layer system that provides protection from the "corrosive effects of temporality"[7] over time, Bergson searches for a way to protect interior duration from the "phantom of space"[8] and thus from the corruption by technology. But as an attentive witness to technological shifts in meaning around 1900, Bergson still lets his thinking occur in metaphors that originate from the technological field. When Walter Benjamin accuses Bergson of separating memory from the dimension of historic experience and thus de-historicizing it,[9] then this is no doubt the case. However, in his use of *solid metaphors* (Derrida) and supplementary machines, Bergson stands on completely historic and thus contingent ground. Bergson's essentialist exploration of a time (without space) occurs in the imagery of *another space* (Foucault), which attempts to avoid logics of space – such as "the talk of timelines and points in time."[10] We read about *regions* and *zones*, *cones* and *cycles*, *pianos* and *notes of a melody*, *snowballs*, *knots*, *threads*, *rubber bands* and *nets*, *rivers* and *floods*, but also about *fireworks* and *explosions*. However, in no way – and here I agree with Wolfgang Ernst[11] – can Bergson's choice of words and metaphors be considered as being representative for the media discourses and the media culture around 1900, at least, as far as the "expanding culture of the visible"[12] is concerned.

Even if he often draws many metaphors from the field of optics (especially photography), central aspects of photography – for example the materiality and sensitivity of the photo plate – only play a very marginal role. This lies in strong contrast to Benjamin or even Proust. The act of photographing has priority – the "work of adjustment, something like the focusing of a camera"[13] – and thus memory as an event of transfer: a live-stream of a singular, non-reproducible event. The focus is on the unique aura of an emerging image of memory: the singular, unreproducible *call for* or *call of* memory, not the material-based *re-call* of memories. "Dial M for Memory" means getting connected to a source that has no answering machine attached (as far as the *mémoire habitude* is not concerned). Just like perception is conceived of Bergson as an "electromagnetic field," "that draws more and more circles from the exterior object to individual memories,"[14] remembering becomes an event in which the basis remains immaterial and virtual, "while the pointed S that means the present in every moment constantly moves forwards and, without pause, touches the mobile level – just like an electronic cathode ray that writes lines of images on monitors."[15] What's decisive is that Bergson doesn't establish the receptivity of matter as the base of memory, nor does he assume space as a deferment of remembering – as does Freud with his mystic writing pad. Instead, he declares the productivity of the virtual to be the source of power, and our present body to be a receiving station. Even if remembering according to Bergson means the gradual materialization (= densification and sharpening) of a memory image from the "depths of memory,"[16] pure memories only exist (and insist) in the immateriality of duration.

Bergson regards the cinematographic mechanism with its artificial reconstruction (= falsification) of duration in the division of time not only as a welcome metaphor for a particular path that modern thinking has taken, but rather as a central agency and co-constructor of modernity. As a mere technique of reproduction that always generates the same illusion of time from "always the same images in always the same order,"[17] film is nowhere near able to correspond to the creative becoming of duration and could never achieve an intuitive surrender to things – what Bergson calls: the *settlement in change* (*die Niederlassung in der Veränderung*).[18] Thus film has not even an inkling of what Epstein, Morin and others will call *photogénie*. Film, according to Bergson, means a constant "starting over"[19] without creative power. In his late work *La Pensée et le mouvant* (1939) Bergson repeats and reaffirms his notion of *L'Evolution créatrice* (1907):

> *[...] the film could run ten times, one hundred times, one thousand times faster, without anything being changed in what is shown. If it ran infinitely quickly, if the sequence (outside of the apparatus this time) were accelerated to such an extent that it all melded into one moment for us, then they would still be the same images. Thus this kind of succession adds nothing new: quite the contrary, it would take something away. It would express a deficit, an inadequacy of our perception that would be doomed to cut the film down to one image at a time, instead of grasping it as a whole.*[20]

What film can embody is an insufficiency of daily – *impure* – perception: the necessity of setting intervals as an expression of a thinking that is oriented towards behavior and efficiency. While the acts performed by hands are valued positively in Freud's *A Note Upon the Mystic Writing Pad* because they simultaneously protect and open the archive of memory by periodic picking up the cover page – *the archive always begins with a cut!*[21] –, in the case of Bergson, hands intervene to falsify movement:

> *[...] you will always experience the child's disappointment as it claps its hands together while trying to catch smoke billows. The movement escapes into the interval, because each attempt to reconstruct change from certain states includes the senseless prerequisite that movement is made up of non-movement.*[22]

However, Freud and Bergson still meet at a remarkable point. Although Freud refers – more or less implicit – to the visual, concrete nature of film as projection, while Bergson – completely ignoring the projected film – draws on the *cinematographic mechanisms* of Etienne Jules Marey's provenience, Freud and Bergson join in a fundamental false estimate of filmic performance of time. With performance of time I mean: the ability of film to make temporal differences tangible and – like memory – to set an ontological paradox between presence and absence. If filmic events correspond to our dream architecture and the plasticity of dreams, according to Freud, always sets up situations as if happening right now, in the "present,"[23] then the projected film knows nothing other than the present. And since memory for Freud never means exact reproduction, but always a retroactive reworking of the past and finally its conclusion – by breaking through repetition automatism –, then film, if simply regarded as a device of storage and reproduction, could never have the suitable impulse structure for evoking memories and elaborating on them. The contrast program that can evoke this ability is called *talking cure*: remembering, repeating, working through. Just like hysteria and transference, film offers at best a playground for reenactments and re-visitations of the past.

Bergson arrives more explicitly at a similarly simplifying assessment. If film is nothing but a spatial archive for points in time that find themselves lined up like dead butterflies, then from this perspective film is suspending any possible dynamics in time. Be it the film strip (for Bergson), be it the film projection (for Freud), both see nothing but the present in film.

In addition, they both enjoy employing machines as metaphorical assistants, to subsequently bring them to their limits and let apparatus-free, live memory begin, where the temporal logic of film experience could take hold. In an apparatus, memory can only become a metaphor (which is why, in the Freud's case, it is placed in quotation marks in his *A Note Upon the Mystic Writing Pad*[24]):

> *There must come a point at which the analogy between an auxiliary apparatus of this kind and the organ which is its prototype will cease to apply. It is true, too, that, once the writing has been erased, the Mystic Pad cannot 'reproduce' it from within; it would be a mystic pad indeed if, like our memory, it could accomplish that.*[25]

However, Freud doesn't defend himself (in contrast to Bergson) against the "phantom of space." Quite the contrary: he sees the Psyche as *expanded*.[26] But analog to Bergson, Freud also turns against a "techno-morphization" of the memorial flux. Freud's mystic writing pad functions and figures as a lifeless, subject-free space that, though it can realize the "dream of memory uncorrupted by time,"[27] is not able to achieve a sudden shift of the mechanical to the living[28] and thus the re-inscription of past impressions in the present – from within. Hands may have a finger in the pie, when it comes to the storage of permanent traces, but when attention is drawn to the retrieval of the traces, Freud – in contrast to the surrealists – did not consider of any *écriture automatique*. Remembering the archive, understood as a disruption of the system caused by subjective fade-ins and cross fades, remains a wonder that can't be simulated by the mystic writing pad (but could be simulated and stimulated by film).

Similar to the way Bergson confronts the cinematographic mechanism with intuition and duration – while forgetting that it's precisely film's mechanism of projection that is dependent on the subjectivity of duration – Freud is also interested in the mystic writing pad as a pure buffer or long-term storage, whereby remembering occurs in a virtual, ideal sphere – as a non-locatable (but physically manipulable) phenomenon of emergence. Bergson goes one metaphysical step further by not only declaring any psycho-physical parallelism to be a "radical illusion,"[29] but also assuming the existence of organs that receive "virtual images in the mind's dimension:"[30] "[…] no trace of an image can remain in the substance of the brain […]. Instead, there are merely, in that substance, organs of virtual perception, influenced by the intention of the memory, as there are the periphery organs of real perception, influenced by the action of the object."[31]

Whether film (Bergson) or mystic writing pad (Freud), in both cases we are dealing with total archive machines that then fail when confronted with remembering as a process and thus memory as a dimension of experience. Both did not consider the fact that film also has the power to re-create, transform things and the potential to temporalize space: not only by recording movement, but also by producing it via camera movement (as film can also re-construct space in time via re-*cadrage* and re-montage). Although Gilles Deleuze succeeded in his books on film to save Bergson as a meta-film theoretician, it appears as though Deleuze also seems to have succumbed to a misjudgment of *Early Cinema* in particular. He defends Bergson's underestimation of film with a rather simplifying argument that film "in its 'primitive' early stage" – characterized by long-shot tableaus and an immobile camera – "had not yet corresponded to the dynamics of Bergson's philosophy:" "[…] neither at its beginnings, nor in the 1930s (Bergson died in 1941) did film lack intensity of movement,"[32] writes Heike Klippel, and thus proves that Deleuze reproduced one of Bergson's argumentative mistakes.

Decisive is that Bergson places the cinematographic mechanism in the context of 19th century archival obsessions. When, in *Matière et Mémoire*, he imagines a fundamental, completely independently functioning memory apparatus that "records […] all the events of our daily life as they occur in time" – neglecting "no detail," leaving "to each fact, to each gesture, its place and date," "regardless of utility or of practical application"[33] – then he is affiliating himself with archive phantasms that can be found in computer pioneer Charles Babbage's ideas or even those of Georg Friedrich Felix Eberty (among others). In his astronomic text *Die Gestirne und die Weltgeschichte* (1846) the latter imagines the cosmos as an archive of images and attaches an investigative utopia to it. Assuming it were possible to reach a star (light years away), in order to direct a "highly powerful telescope" onto the earth, then it would also be possible, in principle, to let world history pass before our eyes and solve all "secret deeds"[34] from Caspar Hauser's abduction and origins up to the shot that killed Karl the 12th. It's about an impersonal, subjectless ontological memory with a tremendous voracity that operates by accumulating and keeps the past in a power-less state of idleness. In fact, the more Bergson emphasizes the powerlessness of a past that is endlessly advancing and "gnawing into the future"[35] and that maintains itself virtually (precisely *not* as a Freudian trace!), the more he seems to instantiate this past to a powerfull "magnetiseur," standing behind the "hallucinations it evokes."[36]

Besides, various memories are drafted in Bergson's texts that can be read as outlines of different archives and – non-static – *anarchives* (W. Ernst). We have *la mémoire-habitude*, the repeating, re-producing automatism of the body memory, and *la mémoire souvenir*, the imagining memory that is identified with a positive automatism, the duration: "the past preserves itself automatically on its own."[37] We also have the cinematographic archive machine and the more process-oriented (inner and outer) an-archives that preserve memories in a condition of sustained rememberability through contraction and expansion. The body sees itself as thrown back and forth between at least two an-archives. On the one side there is an an-archive of the past, the so called pure memory, dislocating the subject, pushing it into a subjectless being of the past, in order to let the subject re-shape and re-activate its individual memory images and return (back) to the (future) present, along the lines of (re-)actualization.

And on the other side, there is an an-archive of the present, accessible by pure perception, "whereby we place ourselves in the very heart of things"[38] and settle down in the nexus of material images. A live stream of memories meets a live stream of moving-images, re-centered around a preferred image and a zone of indetermination: the body that functions like a moving mirror, doubling the actual existence into a virtual existence. Since, according to Bergson, the body and the brain are nothing more than images among other images, these can then under no circumstances serve as a reservoir for images; instead, they are a part of the world memory as acting and reacting images: "memory is not in us; we are the ones moving in a memory of being [*Seins-Gedächtnis*]."[39] In Bergson's view or better: in his changing parallax views, these two an-archives – pure memory on the one side, the world of movement-images on the other side – slowly begin to communicate, to differentiate themselves into different durations, interior and exterior temporal rhythms, to then finally find their common origin in the expansive duration of a universe that takes time.[40] Despite Bergson's interest in various degrees of mixture between matter and material, Bergson remains a metaphysic of memory in his notion that memory has a status of existence that is completely independent of matter and, to cite Deleuze, is the *reality of the virtual*[41] (instead of just being the possibility of the real).

The Claim of Memory (According to Peirce)

Finally, let me give Bergson's assumption of pure memory beyond the materiality of space a rather rude awakening and direct the virtuality of duration out of its quietistic position with the materiality of Peirce's pure indexicality. "Anything which focuses the attention is an index," writes Peirce. "It takes hold of our eyes."[42] In other words: the index finger's compulsion now takes possession of our freedom – which is where according to Bergson all things "are thrown back and reflected"[43] – and traces the idealistic subject back to its self-exteriority: its existential and indexical relations (by the way, it's the third time that hands half a finger in the pie). The tension in time (Bergson) becomes an extension in space (Peirce), the attention is focused on something that is there, in space, as a material trace of something that is no longer there. It's about the singularity of a past event – a *something has been* – insisting in the presence of matter, its reproducibility and possibility (not virtuality).

Although one can find numerous contact points between Bergson's philosophy of living movement and Peirce's semiotic philosophy of mind, I want to highlight a crucial difference.

There is no doubt that both philosophers assumed an impersonal, subjectless *Seins-Gedächtnis*. In the same manner as Bergson writes that "the photograph, if photograph there be, is already taken, already developed in the very heart of things and at all the points of space"[44] and has no need for an enlightening subject, in Peirce's case the index requires no subject in order to continue to insist. Peirce's memory doesn't expand with the strength of pure duration, but rather begins lay itself out by virtue of the mnemonic energy of indexes and the relational quality of signs (also including breaks in transmission, disruptions and distortions). More important, Peirce's signs only then attain the function of carrying meaning when they meet with an interpreter who is challenged to regain the insisting *dynamic object* via the *immediate object* within the sign.

I see the decisive difference between Peirce and Bergson in the meaning of the exterior – the *outward clash* – for the constitution of subjectivity. Constructing memory in accordance with Peirce means to let memory begin its work in the exterior and to understand its character as radically media-based (and therefore processual). It is not without reason that Derrida began considering the project of a "pragrammatology."[45] Even if there are, according to Peirce, indexicalities that do not define themselves in their existential relation to things, but rather present themselves as an effect of the relation between signs, ideas and thoughts, the expectation remains that

there is an exterior to semiosis, a claim of a locked room (or a black box), an unheard voice that propels semiosis and its investments. Because of the fact that, according to Peirce, *every thought is a sign*, thinking only occurs via a "material proceeding," a "phenomenology of immanence" and a "semantics of (receptive, material) surfaces"[46] that connect technology and thought in an extremely profound way. When Peirce writes that the objective is to "carry our mind into the laboratory and literally make instruments of thought out of alembics and cucurbits,"[47] then – in a much more radical manner than Bergson – Peirce has taken his mind also into the photo lab (and almost into the cinema), in order to explain thinking as a "cross-fade in the sequence of images:" a composite photography (I am referring to an article by Helmut Pape about Bergson, with the title: *The Thought as Superimposition in the Sequence of Images*).[48] Both, Bergson and Peirce, did use the phenomenon of the after-image as a thinking image for the co-existence of memory and perception. While Bergson draws on the after-image to demonstrate the invasion and infusion of the present moment by memory images, Peirce uses the after-image to draw subjectivity back to compulsions of the outside. It's not about a pure memory that fades in the stream of materiality by means of memory images, in order to retain itself again and again back to virtuality, it's about a memory that can only find its reality and possibility in the outward clash and in matter.
If there is a politics of the archive that can be extracted of Peirce's philosophy of mind and I suggest that there is one, it is a politics of permanent re-membering that includes the materiality and *impart-ability* (Benjamin) of signs, the historicity of memory as well as the right of inspection, to say it with Derrida: *le droit de regard*. To conceive of a re-membering view with Peirce means allowing singularities to insist and phantoms to convene where they can be made impartable and readable as material traces. And where else should this re-vision of phantoms occur, if not in a cinema, this playground for *material ghosts*?[49]

Illustrations

68. From *The Bridge* (1929) directed by Charles Vidor, cap-shot. 1.
69. From *The Bridge* (1929) directed by Charles Vidor, cap-shot. 2.
70. From *The Bridge* (1929) directed by Charles Vidor, cap-shot. 3.
71. From *The Bridge* (1929) directed by Charles Vidor, cap-shot. 4.
72. From *The Bridge* (1929) directed by Charles Vidor, cap-shot. 5.
73. From *The Bridge* (1929) directed by Charles Vidor, cap-shot. 6.
74. From *The Bridge* (1929) directed by Charles Vidor, cap-shot. 7.

Notes

[*] Translation by Christopher Langer.

[1] Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever. A Freudian Impression*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago-London 1995, p. 3.

[2] Walter Benjamin, *Berlin Childhood around 1900*, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge 2006, pp. 120-122.

[3] ... writes Benjamin in a deleted passage in his autobiography. Walter Benjamin, *Berliner Kindheit um Neunzehnhundert*, in Id., *Gesammelte Schriften*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/Main 1991, vol. IV/1, p. 305.

[4] Ambrose Bierce, *An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge and Other Stories*, Zweisprachige Edition, dtv, München 1980, p. 48.

[5] Jacques Derrida, Bernard Stiegler, *Echographies of Television*, Polity Press, Cambridge 2002, p. 33.

[6] Mary Ann Doane, *The Emergence of Cinematic Time. Modernity, Contingency, The Archive*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge-London 2002, p. 67.

[7] *Idem*, p. 37.

[8] Henri Bergson, *Zeit und Freiheit*, Europa Verlagsanstalt, Hamburg 1994, p. 77.

[9] Walter Benjamin, *Charles Baudelaire. Ein Lyriker im Zeitalter des Hochkapitalismus*, in Id., *Gesammelte Schriften*, cit., p. 608.

[10] Kerstin Volland, *Zeitspieler. Inszenierungen des Temporalen bei Bergson, Deleuze und Lynch*, Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, Wiesbaden 2009, p. 59.

[11] Wolfgang Ernst, *Das Gesetz des Gedächtnisses*, Kulturverlag Kadmos, Berlin 2007, p. 104.

[12] Christine Gledhill, *The Melodramatic Field: An Investigation*, in Id. (ed.), *Home is Where the Heart is*, BFI, London 1987, p. 21.

[13] Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, Zone Books, New York 1991, p. 134.

[14] *Idem*, p. 57.

[15] *Idem*, p. 104.

[16] Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, cit., p. 90.

[17] Kerstin Volland, *Zeitspieler. Inszenierungen des Temporalen bei Bergson, Deleuze und Lynch*, cit., p. 58.

[18] See Henri Bergson, *Schöpferische Entwicklung*, Coron, Zürich 1967, p. 305.

[19] *Idem*, p. 305.

[20] Henri Bergson, *Denken und schöpferisches Werden*, Aufsätze und Vorträge, Europäische Verlagsanstalt/Rotbuch, Hamburg 1993, p. 29 (Translation by Christopher Langer).

[21] See Wolfgang Ernst, *Das Gesetz des Gedächtnisses*, cit., p. 135.

[22] Henri Bergson, *Schöpferische Entwicklung*, cit., p. 305 (Translation by Christopher Langer).

[23] See Sigmund Freud, *Die Traumdeutung*, in Id., *Studienausgabe*, Fischer, Frankfurt/Main 2000, vol. 2, p. 511.

[24] See Wolfgang Ernst, *Das Gesetz des Gedächtnisses*, cit., p. 44.

[25] Sigmund Freud, *Notiz über den Wunderblock*, in Id., *Studienausgabe*, cit., vol. 3, p. 368 (Translation by Christopher Langer).

[26] Sigmund Freud, *Ergebnisse, Ideen, Probleme*, in Id., *Gesammelte Werke*, Fischer, Frankfurt/Main 1999, vol. 17, p. 152.

[27] Mary Ann Doane, *The Emergence of Cinematic Time. Modernity, Contingency, The Archive*, cit., p. 44.

[28] See Heike Klippel, "Bergson und der Film," in *Frauen und Film*, no. 56/57, February 1995, p. 95.

[29] Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, cit., p. 73.

[30] Kerstin Volland, *Zeitspieler*, cit., p. 52.

[31] Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, cit., p. 256.

[32] Heike Klippel, "Bergson und der Film," cit., p. 80.

[33] Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, cit., p. 81.

[34] Felix Eberty, *Die Gestirne und die Weltgeschichte*, in Karl Clausberg, *Zwischen den Sternen: Lichtbildarchive*, Akademie Verlag, Berlin 2006, pp. 149-152.

[35] Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, cit., p. 150.

[36] Gilles Deleuze, *Das Zeit-Bild*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/Main 1997, p. 163.

[37] Henri Bergson, *Denken und schöpferisches Werden*, cit., p. 174.

[38] Henry Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, cit., p. 67.

[39] Gilles Deleuze, *Das Zeit-Bild*, cit., p. 132.

[40] Henri Bergson, *Schöpferische Entwicklung*, cit., p. 17.

[41] See Gilles Deleuze, *Henri Bergson zur Einführung*, Junius, Hamburg 1989, p. 126.

[42] Mary Ann Doane, *Emergence of Cinematic Time*, cit., pp. 92, 101.

[43] Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, cit., p. 37.

[44] *Idem*, p. 38.

[45] See Michael Wetzel, *Referenz und Kontext. Randgänge einer 'Pragrammatologie'*, in Ludig Nagl, Hugh J. Silverman (ed.), *Textualität der Philosophie: Philosophie und Literatur*, Oldenbourg, Wien-München 1994, pp. 205-217.

[46] Ralf Beuthan, *Das Undarstellbare: Film und Philosophie. Metaphysik und Moderne*, Königshausen und Neumann, Würzburg 2006, p. 116

[47] Charles S. Peirce, *The Fixation of Belief*, http://www.peirce.org/writings/p107.html, last access 20 August 2011.

[48] Helmut Pape, "Der Gedanke als Überblendung in der Folge der Bilder. Peirces visuelles Modell geistiger Prozesse," in *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie*, no. 43 (1995), pp. 479-496.

[49] See Gilberto Perez, *The Material Ghost. Films and Their Medium*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore 1998.

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Douleur de l'archive

La douleur de l'archive est le revers de son attrait : c'est d'abord la douleur du temps. Temps perdu dont la recherche par le film a ceci de singulier que l'élaboration de mémoire liée par nature à l'expérience de la projection vient redoubler celle de la réalité passée dont l'archive se veut le témoignage ou la rédemption.

Il y a deux sortes d'archives, bien que la frontière qui les sépare soit poreuse, et que des glissements s'opèrent selon la façon dont l'archive se trouve appelée à telle ou telle fin : d'un côté, l'archive privée, dont le film de famille est une incarnation ; de l'autre, l'archive publique, d'emblée historique, que les « actualités » ont par exemple longtemps représentée.

Dans l'œuvre immense de Yervant Gianikian et Angela Ricci Lucchi, l'archive, toute archive, par le retraitement dont elle fait l'objet, l'exaltation qu'induit sa transformation par leur « caméra analytique » et le mouvement singulier qui ainsi en découle, suscitant une réflexion interne à tout défilement d'images – dans cette œuvre, l'archive, si privée soit son origine, s'avère un indice d'histoire, chaque plan, chaque photogramme devenant l'instant éternisé d'une méditation continuellement reprise sur l'insoutenable cruauté d'un siècle colonisateur et guerrier. De là, naît une douleur propre, que l'art transfigure en beauté sans jamais atténuer en aucun de leurs films sa valeur instante d'analyse et de témoignage. En ce sens, le passé s'y convertit en présent perpétuel. Le présent actuel-virtuel de la projection selon laquelle l'expérience se donne. D'où la pensée paradoxale qui fait dire à ces « cinéastes en archives »[1] : « Nous n'utilisons pas l'archive en tant qu'archive. Nous utilisons des *ready-mades*, comme faisait Duchamp, pour parler d'aujourd'hui, de l'horreur qui nous entoure ».[2]

D'où, aussi, la résistance, à terme sans issue, engagée jusque-là par les cinéastes contre toute idée de reduplication de leurs films en DVD, pour préserver l'expérience de ce devenir-présent de l'archive au fil du temps de projection.

On pense aussi à la façon dont Alain Resnais a été ce cinéaste qui a signé, disait Serge Daney, « trois films géniaux, trois témoignages irrécusables de notre modernité, trois manuscrits rédigés en V.O. dans ce que Blanchot appelle 'L'écriture du désastre' : *Nuit et brouillard* (1955), *Hiroshima mon amour* (1959), et *Muriel ou* *le temp d'un retour* (1963) ». Daney ajoutait qu'était ainsi arrivé à Resnais cette « chose terrible », d'avoir montré « qu'au cinéma comme ailleurs il faudrait compter avec un personnage de plus : *l'espèce humaine* ».[3] Une archive, chaque fois, se portait garante : d'abord, les images des camps ; puis celles de la catastrophe nucléaire ; enfin, un faux film d'amateur, d'allure innocente, mais éveillant chez celui qui l'avait tourné le souvenir insoutenable d'une jeune femme soumise à la torture pendant la guerre d'Algérie.

Dans ses réflexions sur le film de famille, Roger Odin soulignait bien comment des images banales se trouvent alors innervées par les mots haletants du récit dont les accompagne Bernard ; de sorte que, selon la ligne de l'identification au personnage, « le récit de la torture de Muriel devient ainsi notre film, un film qui nous implique personnellement puisque c'est nous qui en produisons les images ».[4]

Mais une douleur toute autre peut naître du film de famille, du vrai film de famille. On a pu l'éprouver ainsi – beaucoup l'ont évoquée – face à l'extraordinaire archive déployée tout au long de *Must Read After My Death* (Morgan Dews, 2007),[5] que ce réalisateur de documentaires a eu la chance de trouver, par un hasard aussi surprenant que prescrit, à la mort de sa grand mère, Allis, en 2001, à l'âge de 89 ans. Mariée, à la fin des années 1950, à Charley dont elle eut quatre enfants (c'était, pour l'un et l'autre, une seconde union), Allis semble avoir pris l'initiative de vouloir remédier à l'absence seize semaines par an de son mari à l'étranger pour des raisons professionnelles, par le moyen d'enregistrements sonores et de prises de vues qu'ils pouvaient ainsi s'échanger à distance, mais qu'aussi bien ils ont continué à accumuler quand la famille se trouvait réunie (Allis surtout, ainsi que parfois les enfants, crédités avec leur père au générique de fin). Mais il s'agissait également, de la part des parents (c'est explicité à plusieurs reprises), de constituer un matériel que leurs enfants pourraient plus tard prendre plaisir à voir. Cela n'aura pas empêché que jusqu'à la mort soudaine de Charley, en 1969, l'affaire ait pris au fil des années un tour de plus en plus sombre, à la mesure des difficultés grandissantes du couple et de la famille, et des accidents de la vie (la mort soudaine d'un enfant, l'internement d'un autre, avec l'interminable scénario psychiatrique qui s'ensuit).

Toujours est-il qu'à la mort de Allis, ses héritiers eurent la surprise de découvrir, dans un débarras de la petite maison du Vermont où elle s'était retirée depuis la mort de son mari, le dossier « *Must Read After My Death* », contenant 300 pages de transcriptions de bandes, accompagnées de 50 heures de journaux audio et de lettres enregistrées par Dictaphone, ainsi que 201 films de famille.

Passé un prologue livrant la règle du jeu et soulignant le caractère singulier de sa principale protagoniste et responsable, Allis, épouse et mère aimante mais rétive à se trouver définie par ce rôle, ce film de 75 minutes cherche à restituer, grâce à un matériau proliférant agrémenté de nombreuses photographies, le déroulé de six vies mêlées formant une famille. Il se développe ainsi selon une ligne aussi résolument chronologique qu'elle s'avère éclatée, fragmentée, heurtée, disséminée dans la réalité du montage. Le réalisateur a pris le parti de souligner par de rares cartons s'inscrivant à même l'image les prénoms des principaux personnages, ainsi que certains repères essentiels de lieux, de dates, d'événements. Mais il n'a recouru à aucun commentaire qui doublerait l'image de sorte à en ordonner le dessein. Le reproche lui en a été fait par un spectateur mécontent (Chris Knipp, sur IMDB) qui souligne ce manque de « *voice over* » ou d'interviews ; au nom d'une exigence de rationalisation psychologique, il déplore ainsi une incomplétude d'information, de jugement, et l'abandon du spectateur à la présence trop brute des matériaux enregistrés.

Formellement, tous ces plans qui déboulent, plus ou moins organisés en séquences, ces images montrent tout ou partie des traits que Roger Odin a reconnus comme distinctifs du film de famille : l'absence de clôture ; l'émiettement narratif ; une temporalité indéterminée ; un rapport à l'espace paradoxal ; un effet de photographie animée ; l'adresse à la caméra ; les sautes ; les brouillages de la perception. Ces traits subsistent ici en devenant la chair d'un film second destiné à un monde sans commune mesure avec leur monde d'origine. Bien sûr, franchissant le cercle initial de leurs destinataires présumés, tous ces fragments d'images et de mots s'infléchissent, prennent sens les uns par rapports aux autres, au gré d'une chronique en quête de vérités conflictuelles cherchant à se dire et à se comprendre, par la voix d'Allis principalement. Mais cela, jamais jusqu'au point de satisfaire un spectateur qui demanderait à *Must Read After My Death* d'atténuer par quelque prise de distance la pression immédiate des traumas qui le fondent, depuis le choix initial menant à tous ces enregistrements jusqu'à leur découverte et à la volonté d'un petit-fils cinéaste de se confronter à cet héritage ignoré, si largement issu des « pires heures des pires jours des pires années »[6] de sa famille. D'un autre côté, cette masse précipitée d'images ne peut jamais prétendre à la liberté d'invention et à la grâce d'art auxquelles dans le moindre de ses films autobiographiques et presque cinq heures durant dans *As I Was Moving Ahead Occasionally I Saw Brief Glimpses of Beauty* (2000) Jonas Mekas touche immanquablement, par le choix maintenu d'un pur abandon à l'image, par une transmutation continue de forme et de style à partir de son expérience unique du filmage.

C'est que tout au long de *Must Read After My Death* du sens se cherche, obstinément, de la narration se poursuit, tant au fil des enregistrements d'origine que dans les opérations du montage.

D'où une tension vive, très particulière, qui transit progressivement le spectateur. Elle tient pour beaucoup au peu de correspondance, aux flottements entre ce que le son dit et ce que montre l'image ; ainsi, entre la façon dont on passe si souvent d'instants où la voix, celle d'Allis surtout, confesse son désarroi, s'adressant à son mari, au psychiatre ou à un auditeur imaginaire, alors que la caméra s'attarde sur des objets, des corps, des décors, des paysages, des instants de vie quotidienne à travers lesquels s'avèrent à l'extrême le caractère intransitif du film de famille, son opacité, ses effets de confusion, sa capacité de brouillage. Il se produit ainsi peu à peu une sorte de déréliction, pour qui se trouve comme téléporté depuis le cercle de famille au sein d'une communauté de spectateurs anonymes. Comment saisir ensemble, par exemple, ces mots de Allis à Charley : « Nous avions un accord. Nous ne lirions pas les enregistrements des autres », et ces plans flous, surimpressionnés, de plage où l'on aperçoit des silhouettes s'agiter et une femme puis une enfant avancer en nageant, dans lesquelles on croit deviner Allis et sa fille Anne ? Ou tels plans sur des joueurs méconnaissables de ping-pong et de tennis en regard des remarques acerbes d'Allis à Charley sur le code de leurs échanges ? Ou ces mots de Charley y revenant à travers trois plans mats sur un buisson aux couleurs fauves, devant la maison ? Ou ce long plan dérivant sur une cabane entourée d'eau, entre des photos noir et blanc, elles très circonscrites, passant de l'enfance d'Allis au mariage de Anne ? Et que dire de cette violente altercation entre un des fils et son père, puis entre celui-ci et sa femme (dont on s'étonne même qu'elle ait pu être enregistrée, par qui, comment), pendant qu'une caméra hésitante s'attarde dans la maison sur les meubles, les murs chargés de livres et de photos, sur des paquets-cadeaux amassés pour on ne sait quelle fête ? Ainsi s'ouvre dans le corps de ce film comme une fêlure qui, par petites touches, par degrés, exclut le regard de lui-même, en même temps qu'elle l'attire, et fascine, jusqu'à une sorte d'égarement. Comme si l'auteur-monteur avait été guidé par une prescience de l'effet à produire, quelque peu analogue à sa propre impression quand il s'est plongé dans cette masse en fusion et qu'il a commencé à en monter des moments : « C'était atroce ».

Il est ainsi arrivé – il m'est arrivé, et cela ne peut survenir qu'en situation de projection, et même de première projection, par la surprise unique qui s'y crée – il est arrivé qu'à partir d'un certain moment, impossible à localiser, le film s'est soudain obscurci, comme frappé d'une tache aveugle s'interposant face à son déroulement. Une raison majeure tient certainement au temps déjà passé, et ainsi au cumul des effets de perturbation éprouvés jusque-là entre les voix et les images. Les traits propres à la matière du film de famille, déjà soulignés, contribuent beaucoup à ce trouble, produisant à la longue une fatigue du regard, une désorientation. Il faut ajouter la très mauvaise qualité du son, livré dans sa brutalité, que la présence continuelle de sous-titres atténue, mais seulement pour une part, d'autant qu'eux-mêmes peinent souvent à suivre le flot de la voix comme nous à en suivre la lecture. On soulignera aussi l'effet dépressif induit peu à peu par la musique, d'une fausse légèreté, très circulaire, entêtante, qui enfonce l'image dans sa fatalité. Ainsi peut s'accentuer chez un spectateur la part inévaluable des souvenirs personnels, conscients et inconscients, surgissant face à cette épreuve. Elle renvoie chacun au fait qu'on sort d'une famille et que, si heureuse la vie ait pu être, s'y soit mêlée une part de névrose et de malheur. Mais, surtout, le sentiment finit par s'imposer que toute vie ainsi documentée et ainsi rapportée ouvre en elle-même une sorte d'enfer, par la façon dont en soutenant si fort l'illusion de réalité d'un temps rétrospectif elle fait ressortir le trait frappant de toute vie : sa confusion, son illisibilité. Dans un entretien ancien, Michel Foucault disait de l'archive pour laquelle on connaît la force de son goût : « Un cauchemar me poursuit depuis mon enfance : j'ai sous les yeux un texte que je ne peux pas lire, ou dont seule une infime partie m'est déchiffrable ; je fais semblant de le lire, je sais que je l'invente ; puis le texte soudain se brouille entièrement, je ne peux plus rien lire ni même inventer, ma gorge se serre et je me réveille ».[7] Ce serait la puissance de *Must Read After My Death*, et la promesse de son titre : que l'enfer propre singulier dans lequel il précipite y devienne celui du spectateur face au temps perdu de sa propre vie. Telle serait ici la douleur de l'archive.

C'est en voyant quelques semaines plus tard *Et si* (2010) de Serge Lalou que j'ai compris plus nettement cet effet attaché à la possible douleur de l'archive. Parce que ce film en prend la réalité à rebours : il fait des membres de famille des archives vivantes, de tout dépôt de passé l'instance d'une généalogie en acte, par la grâce d'un précipité de fiction transformant en acteurs les garants supposés de la vérité documentaire.

Il est presque impossible de raconter *Et si*. Car c'est un processus plus qu'une histoire, et une suite de transformations que la mise en jeu de ce processus engage. Disons que c'est un film qu'un fils, Serge, a éprouvé le besoin de faire sur son père Jean-Claude ; mais avec ce père comme acteur d'un personnage aux virtualités multiples qu'ils paraissent réinventer ensemble au fil d'un tournage dont le film devient le développement. Il y a là trois personnages principaux : le père à qui son fils metteur en scène explique, les décomptant sur ses doigts, que son personnage, « le Gabriel du film », doit condenser trois personnes : lui-même, « le vrai Gabriel », et son propre père (« cette période parisienne, avant le départ vers l'Algérie, où il est parti de chez lui et il erre, il erre dans Paris à travers des lieux qui sont des lieux auxquels il est attaché pour différentes raisons »). Le second personnage est Simon (Bruno Puzulu), qu'une répétition de scènes du script donne pour le petit-fils de Gabriel, mais qui en devient, au fur à mesure que le film avance, une sorte de figure de contrepoint et de fils métaphorique, tenant lieu du vrai fils occupé à la mise en scène – bien que Simon-Bruno soit aussi doté de sa propre famille réelle qu'on voit figurer dans quelques scènes et qu'il évoque dans d'autres, et qu'il incarne également sa propre réalité d'acteur de théâtre et de grand sportif. Meriem, enfin, est une jeune femme algérienne (Sabrina Perret) que le script – un moment feuilleté à l'image et lu par son metteur en scène qui en énonce aussi en voix off des passages à maintes reprises – donne pour un amour mythique de Gabriel : c'est ce rôle qu'on la voit répéter avec Gabriel-Jean-Claude sur un mode ludique (dans la seule scène du film où apparaît une caméra) ; mais cela n'empêche en rien que Meriem devienne l'amour possible de Simon dans la longue dernière partie du film située en Algérie (après qu'en France on ait vu ce dernier pris dans des rapports indécis avec d'autres femmes). Et Meriem se trouve elle-même dotée là-bas d'une famille, mère et grand-mère auprès de qui on la voit s'engager dans une quête de passé qui suscite au fil des souvenirs une recomposition politique et généalogique.

La grande singularité du film tient par là au fait que les personnages, les trois principaux comme ceux qui les prolongent, se trouvent continuellement investis dans de longues conversations qui paraissent improvisées tout en ayant été sans doute au moins en bonne part préconçues (ce qu'accrédite la présence discontinue, en voix off, on l'a dit, mais aussi, discrète et efficiente, à l'image, du fils-metteur en scène). Pourtant un flottement s'ensuit, constituant la chair même du film. D'où l'impression que tout en se parlant entre eux, les personnages en proie à une sorte de rêverie intérieure ne cessent de s'adresser aussi bien à eux-mêmes et par là au spectateur appelé à entrer dans cette ronde kaléidoscopique et toujours frémissante de remémorations. Cette impression est accentuée par un trait singulier de la mise en scène : très souvent, on ne sait, au moins pour un moment, à qui s'adresse le personnage qui parle, avant qu'on ne découvre un second, un troisième personnage, et parfois le metteur en scène en sus.

Ainsi de la parole s'élance sans cesse, se cherchant, et donnant par là d'autant plus à voir ce qu'elle imagine. Les personnages devenant pour nous comme pour ceux qui les côtoient des archives vivantes de leur vie se creusant vers la profondeur de leur passé.

Le grand tournant du film s'opère au moment où il devient clair que Gabriel, ce Gabriel qu'on a vu errer dans Paris, répéter des scènes avec les autres acteurs, puis nouer de longs dialogues avec Simon, que « Gabriel est en Algérie ». Une double détermination d'identité – recherche et affirmation – va s'ensuivre, avec Simon en tiers. D'un côté, Meriem, née là-bas d'une mère algérienne et d'un père français. De l'autre, Gabriel surtout, parlant arabe aussi bien que français, dont la famille eut là ses racines et qui se sent aussi algérien que français sans pour autant ne jamais s'accepter, il le souligne avec force, comme « pied noir ». De sorte que Meriem va retrouver son histoire et ses paysages d'enfance, et qu'on les revoit avec elle qui les montre à Simon ; et Gabriel-Jean-Claude surtout, errant sans fin dans la ville, retrouvant tant d'itinéraires anciens, redevient ce qu'il a été et ce qu'a été avant lui son père, et le vrai Gabriel peut-être, un homme dont les vieux du quartier, assis paisiblement dans la rue, avec lui se souviennent, en égrenant des noms, des généalogies.

C'est alors, à un moment indéterminable, que me sont apparues des images de ma propre vie. Des images ayant les valeurs de flottement et d'insécurité perceptive des images mentales, mais au plus haut degré de précision possible, si ce n'est celui qu'elles prennent dans l'hallucination vraie. Des images s'accompagnant aussi d'un sentiment, très difficile à qualifier : une impression de réalité globale, au sens d'un passé réincorporé en son entier, même si seules des traces ponctuelles s'en donnaient. Je me souviens en particulier que le processus de remémoration dont *Et si* accomplit l'expérience a fait soudain revenir – là encore sans que je puisse dire sur quel moment du film, peut-être la visite si prégnante de Gabriel au cimetière – la vision insistante de la photo de mariage de mes parents, que j'avais revue quelques semaines plus tôt dans la maison d'enfance de ma mère : elle s'est maintenue, de façon très étrange, en une sorte de montage alterné avec les instants et les plans du film, comme les creusant mais sans jamais empêcher de les voir. Jusqu'à précipiter au bord des larmes, comme il arrive aux larmes de cinéma, plus intenses parfois que peuvent l'être les larmes de la vraie vie.

Ainsi, pendant la projection de *Must Read After My Death*, je m'étais retrouvé brutalement précipité, par des flashes obscurs, dans un sentiment nauséeux du souvenir impossible de ma vie, éprouvant un désordre oppressant face à l'irréalité du temps perdu. Alors que je sentais combien face à *Et si* les apparitions d'image, avec le sentiment fort qui les soutenait, avaient acquis une sorte de valeur cathartique. Il ne s'agit pas de comparer les qualités de deux films incomparables, mais de saisir comment la douleur de l'archive que *Must Read After My Death* porte à l'extrême à travers la décision prise de s'y soumettre extensivement, se trouve dans *Et si* transfigurée, par le fait même d'avoir su métamorphoser en plénitude imaginaire une semblable expérience de vie. Sans opter pour la fiction, mais en faisant rejouer par ses acteurs leur vie réelle autant que rêvée, ce film a transmué en archives vivantes l'irréalité du temps passé, et conféré au temps perdu l'illusion d'un temps retrouvé.

Notes

[1] C'est le titre de l'essai de Christa Blümlinger consacré à leur œuvre: *Trafic*, n° 38, printemps 2001.

[2] Daniele Dottorini, « Archivi che salvano. Conversazione con Yervant Gianikian e Angela Ricci Lucchi », dans *Fata Morgana*, n° 2, « Archivio », mai-août 2007, p. 25.

[3] Serge Daney, « Resnais et 'L'écriture du désastre' », dans *Ciné journal*, Cahiers du cinéma, Paris, 1986, p. 104.

[4] Roger Odin, « Le Film de famille dans l'institution familiale », dans Id. (sur la dir. de), *Le Film de famille. Usage privé, Usage public*, Méridiens-Klinksieck, Paris 1995, pp. 33-34.

[5] Deux au moins des nombreux compte rendus trouvés sur Internet http://www.mrqe.com/movie_reviews/must-read-after-my-death-m100073849, dernier accès 10 février 2011, insistent sur le fait que le film de Morgan Dews relègue au rang de « *tea-party* » *Revolutionary Road* (Sam Mendes, 2008), qui conte, comme *Must Read After My Death*, les difficultés personnelles d'un jeune couple élevant ses enfants dans le Connecticut des années 1950.

[6] Entretien de Tim O'Shea avec Morgan Dews pour *Pop Culture* dans http://talkingwithtim.com/wordpress/2009/01/21/morgan-dews-on-must-read-after-my-death/, dernier accès 10 février 2011.

[7] Michel Foucault, «Sur les façons d'écrire l'histoire », entretien par Raymond Bellour (1967), dans *Dits et écrits*, t. I, Gallimard, Paris 1994, p. 595.

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L'Archive en personne… Réflexions autour de la perte, de la conservation et de la survie

> *Qui a dit que le temps vient à bout de toutes les blessures ? Il vaudrait mieux dire que le temps vient à bout de tout, sauf des blessures. Avec le temps, la plaie de la séparation perd ses bords réels. Avec le temps, le corps désiré ne sera bientôt plus, et si le corps désirant a déjà cessé d'être pour l'autre, ce qui demeure, c'est une plaie sans corps.*
> Chris Marker, *Sans soleil*, 1982
>
> *Her Absence Filled the World.*
> William Kentridge, *Sobriety, Obesity and Growing Old*, 1991
>
> *Si tu sais où je suis, cherche-moi. Sans chercher là où je ne suis pas, tu me trouveras.*
> Johan Van Der Keuken, *Lucebert temps et adieux*, 1994

Ce texte, issu de ma présentation, porte encore les marques d'une *tyrannie de l'intimité*[2] et, par moments, il est possible aussi qu'il déborde d'une certaines émotivité. Les œuvres, dont je vais traiter, parfois, je n'ai pas réussi à les regarder en une seule fois, tellement elles étaient déchirantes…

Dans les œuvres audiovisuelles qui m'ont intéressée, se trouve une mémoire intime qui est offerte au partage. Une mémoire aux prises avec des traces, des lacunes, un besoin de faire de l'ordre, et un besoin de créer de l'espace. On remarquera que j'évoque tour à tour des termes qui ont tous à voir avec la notion d'archive, qui est souvent une référence des textes qui composent ce recueil, celle traitée par Jacques Derrida.[3]

Un point central, c'est que j'ai bien dit *intime*, et non personnelle… Il pourrait y avoir dans ces œuvres de la construction, de l'artifice, ou même de la fiction, il n'en demeurerait pas moins qu'elles instaurent avec le spectateur un *accompagnement intime*, où le spectateur partage le travail douloureux accompli par le réalisateur ;[4] ou, pour le dire avec Roger Odin, qui le disait jadis à propos de *Lettres d'amour en Somalie*,[5] « une mise en phase » du spectateur avec le réalisateur et son expérience.

Ces œuvres seront souvent des lettres, et comportent toujours une adresse directe entre un *je* qui s'expose et un *tu* à qui elles s'adressent.

Cela n'a pas d'importance, à la limite, que tout ce qu'on y raconte soit *vrai*. De toutes manières la voix qui s'exprime au *je* veut qu'on la croie, c'est ça notre pacte… Et de plus on nous parle d'un chagrin. Qu'importe alors la véridicité de ce-chagrin-là ? Un chagrin est toujours là à attendre ; un chagrin vrai pourra prendre la place de celui qui nous est raconté, et rendre à l'émotion transmise toute sa densité… Devant ces œuvres nous sommes aux prises avec des « rituels autobiographiques »,[6] qui tentent de conjurer l'angoisse de l'absence.

Ces œuvres sont des tentatives, parfois des réponses, à une question bien intime : comment archiver la vie privée ? Plus particulièrement, quand on a perdu quelque chose, et qu'on souffre du manque, de l'absence, comment faire de l'ordre ?

Je convoque Derrida… Avoir le *mal d'archive*, comme avoir le *mal d'Afrique* ; être en *mal d'archive* comme être en *mal d'Afrique*. C'est-à-dire, c'est être aux prises avec quelque chose qui n'est plus là. Un manque, une lacune, une absence qui pourtant exige et prend de la place... À défaut de ne pas pouvoir joindre à ce texte des extraits d'œuvres audiovisuelles, sur lesquelles la présentation avait été conçue, je vais les décrire rapidement et, par la citation des phrases prononcées dans les commentaires de chaque film, tenter de faire ressortir la démarche contenue dans chacun d'eux, dans le but aussi de pousser le lecteur à les regarder.

Quelques veuves de Noirmoutier, Agnès Varda, 2005 :[7] ce sont des plans serrés, souvent, dans ce film, sur des veuves seules, intercalés avec des plans serrés sur des objets du quotidien, là où se niche encore quelque reste de présence... Ce sont des femmes qui vivent un lieu vidé que Varda rencontre, elles restent sur l'île de Noirmoutier. La même île où Agnès Varda se rendait avec Jacques Demy, et maintenant, en 2005, il n'est plus. À un certain point des rencontres de Varda, deux voisines sont interviewés côte à côte, mais rarement dans le même plan – quoi qu'elles fassent, elles sont seules devant la caméra et devant la vie, mais les sons, au moins les sons passent, de l'une à l'autre, comme dans la vie, quand elles s'entendent jardiner par de là le mur, séparées mais proches. Une dit, regardant la personne derrière la petite caméra qui l'écoute : « le manque, et bien, écoutez, c'est tous les jours. L'absence, le matin au réveil, on est seule devant son petit déjeuneur dans la cuisine, personne à qui parler, la maison est grande et vide. C'est ça le manque. La personne qui n'est plus là, c'est ça ». Et l'autre : « Ben, le manque c'est quand-même la présence... ». Cette tension entre l'absence de l'absent et la présence outrageuse de l'absence, le trop-plein d'absence, qui m'a touchée au fil de mon parcours, s'exprime déjà clairement et douloureusement dans les confidences de ces deux femmes de Noirmoutier...

Lettres d'amour en Somalie, Frédéric Mitterrand, 1981 : un amour brisé, un voyage pour estomper la marque douloureuse de l'abandon. La voix-over du voyageur, sur des images de maisons belles et vides en Somalie...

> *On me disait, tu sais bien que tu l'oublieras un jour. Je me disais, comment le saurai-je, puisque je ne l'oublierai jamais. On me disait, regarde autour de toi, on s'en remet toujours. Je me disais, il n'y a rien à regarder, puisque je ne verrai jamais rien d'autre. On me disait, après il ne reste pas vraiment grand-chose. Je me disais, pourquoi me parlent-ils d'après, je ne sais pas ce qu'avenir veut dire. Tu vis avec un autre, et je suis à peine un souvenir, pourtant je préfère encore ma blessure à toutes celles que recouvrent si mal les mots du réconfort.*

Le Bateau du père, Clémence Hébért, 2009 : « pourquoi les morts ne nous laissent pas tranquilles. Ils sont là dans nos rêves, nos pensées, nos souvenirs, toujours vivants. Le jour où mon père est mort, je crois que je n'ai rien dit, rien éprouvé du tout. Une date s'est inscrite dans ma mémoire. C'était la fin de mon enfance ». Clémence Hébért rentre à Cherbourg, elle l'a quittée depuis longtemps, depuis le suicide du père. Là elle remonte dans la mémoire de sa famille, jusqu'aux racines du bonheur inconscient des enfants et au malheur appuyé des adultes.

Ce voyage à rebours dans son espace d'antan est ponctué d'images du passé, en super 8, en vidéo, photographies à moitié effacées. Le but de son voyage, à regarder le film, est clair : archiver son enfance, archiver ce qu'elle a perdu, jusqu'à trouver pour elle-même une place pour le père absent.

L'absence, théorisée comme nœud psychanalytique par Pierre Fédida,[8] d'ailleurs évoqué par Derrida, « ne se résout pas au passé. Alors le lointain est ce qui rapproche et l'absent est une figure du retour, ainsi qu'on le dit du refoulé ».[9]

Comment faire quand un manque, une absence a pris toute la place, comment faire pour ne pas oublier la chose qui nous manque, l'absent, ce qui ne ferait que nier notre propre désir de l'avoir encore, mais en même temps l'empêcher de nous bouffer la vie ? Voilà une démarche que les œuvres qui m'ont interpellée tentent d'accomplir, comme on accomplirait une cure. Fédida écrit : « la parole est si rageuse de l'absence de l'absent qu'elle en devient créatrice d'œuvre. Jusqu'à l'épuisement et jusqu'à l'extinction de sa passion ».[10]

La démarche de Sophie Calle, pour le livre *Douleur exquise*[11] (œuvre intermédiale par excellence, car ensuite aussi exposition, pièce de théâtre, etc.), fournit un très bel exemple de ça. Un voyage, un éloignement de la personne aimée et l'attente fébrile de la retrouver, animent la première moitié du livre, qui se divise en deux parties. Une première, comme une carte du voyage en Asie de Sophie Calle, qui porte les traces de ses déplacements, dans lesquels elle inscrit le souvenir de son amour lointain qu'elle attend de retrouver dans une chambre d'hôtel de New Delhi ; et à la moitié du livre, la cassure, l'abandon qu'elle subit, dans cette même chambre, le téléphone rouge qui le lui apprend, et un lit vide qui le témoigne, dans une photographie sombre, et son désespoir tout autour… La deuxième moitié du livre sera le parcours difficile de l'épuisement de la douleur : chaque page est une rencontre avec une personne à laquelle Sophie Calle demande : « Quand avez-vous le plus souffert ? ». Au récit de cette peine, elle offre en échange le récit de la sienne, répété 99 fois, jusqu'à s'en vider, s'épuiser par la parole, dans le récit de la douleur et dans l'écoute de celle des autres. « L'absent est à la parole l'objet de sa fascination »[12] dit, en effet, Pierre Fédida. Dans le cas de l'œuvre de Sophie Calle, *Douleur exquise*, la deuxième partie du livre dé-territorialise la douleur.

Dé-territorialiser la douleur a été le mobile de tant de voyages. Combien de fois on a pris un train, un avion, une voiture, suite à une douleur, comme dans les films qui forment la carte derrière ce texte.[13] Dans le cas de ces films, il y a toujours un voyage qui exprime la tentative de ne pas donner à l'absence le trop-plein qu'elle réclame. Comme le dit si bien Frédéric Mitterrand, dans ses *Lettres d'amour en Somalie* :

> *Une nuit où tu n'étais pas là je suis venu dormir chez toi, dans ton lit, dans tes draps. J'avais pris la clef dans la cachette habituelle que je connais bien, puisque pendant longtemps cette chambre, ce lit, ces draps étaient aussi les miens. Je savais que tu dormais alors ailleurs dans Paris, dans une autre maison, un autre lit. Je sentais ton odeur, ton désordre, tes habits tout autour de moi. Cette nuit-là je n'avais plus rien à attendre, étranger parmi ces objets familiers que nous avions si souvent partagés. Je comprenais avec exactitude qu'il ne me restait plus qu'à partir, qu'à sortir de ta vie, et qu'il n'y aurait pour m'accompagner que la douleur que tu m'as laissée.*

Partir, alors, avec son bagage de blessures… Et dans l'acte de prendre des images, dans ces images nouvelles d'un ailleurs, chercher à gouverner sa peine, à pouvoir gouverner du moins quelque chose, les images justement : la prise des images, le travail temporel du commentaire qui fait apparaître et disparaître l'autre, l'absent…

Le lointain du voyage rapproche par moment le voyageur blessé de l'absent qui revient, ne pouvant pas être résolument relayé au passé, comme un refoulé qui doit encore être traité. « Écrire est alors parfois une tentative de rejeter l'objet à l'extérieur, en quelque sorte de l'objectiviser pour en triompher », dit Fédida.[14] « L'absence est le temps impliqué de l'analyse », dit-il encore :[15] ainsi le temps du voyage et le temps du film sont la place donnée à l'absence – pour ne pas céder à son trop-plein.[16] Le cinéaste est un véritable patient en cure auprès de son cinéma. Je convoque un commentaire, extrait d'un autre de ces voyages cinématographiques de cure : *Entering Indifference*, de Vincent Dieutre, 2001. Dans ce film, dont le sous-titre est *Lettre de Chicago*, Vincent Dieutre, dans une Chicago froide, et aux couleurs mornes de la vidéo, arpente les rues anonymes de la ville, étranger et réconforté de cette distance entre lui et ce qui l'entoure, berçant la vision du spectateur par sa voix-over, comme dans mes autres extraits choisis, au *je*. « […] voir du pays, faire les continents. Je serai ainsi plus déplacé encore, plus flexible, offert. J'ai tant aimé voyager avec toi. Le voyage c'était toi, c'était nous faire voire ailleurs, indifferemment, dans le replis centripète et satisfait du couple ». La solitude, et le manque de l'autre, sont ainsi remplis, au fil des images, des souvenirs de l'autre, qui viennent s'accrocher aux plans filmés. L'autre vit dans un fragment de film, dont le cinéaste voyageur règle le rythme et le tempo, maitrisant les apparitions et les disparitions de l'autre, au fil de ses déplacements. Pratiquement maître de l'absence…

Ce à quoi, semble répondre, cette fois par l'échec de la maitrise de l'absence de l'autre, un passage des *Lettres* de Mitterrand. Les images à l'écran sont celles d'un voyage en voiture, dans la brousse, sur des routes vides, dans des villages déserts, prises par le pare-brise de la voiture qui donne une sensation de liberté au voyageur, qui lui apporte du souffle, dans son chagrin. La voix-over, dans sa lamentation, qui seulement à la fin du voyage aura fait le bien d'un mantra, nous dit :

> *[…] et les soirs où tu revenais pour te changer avant de ressortir, et cette fraicheur, cette gaité qui n'étaient plus pour moi, et ces silences, cette injustice, cette oubli volontaire, cette négation volontaire de tout notre passé, et ces projets, ces dîners, ces voyages où je n'avais plus de place, et ces reproches, ces lâchetés, ces reproches, ces mots cruels dont le but était de me faire mal, et ces coups de téléphone que tu donnais en refermant la porte derrière toi, et cette violence, cette haine, alors que j'essais seulement de comprendre en gardant le silence, et ces nuits où tu me laissais seul, ces heures où je traversais des pièces trop vides en murmurant ton nom, ces matins dans la chambre déserte. Pourtant la carte du désamour, je ne savais pas la lire. Parfois des regrets, des fatigues, des nostalgies diffuses te ramenaient vers moi. Oubli, pardon, colère, mes colères, car il y en eut aussi bien sûr : autant de provinces aux consonances étranges qui me quittaient bientôt comme si je n'en avais jamais approché les contours. Je regagnais la plaine, des bords de mer, loin des hivers et des orages. Au travers des lagunes je ne voyais plus que des plages. Tu revins de moins en moins. Il fallut se retourner. D'un regard, j'embrassais alors un territoire immense, le territoire de ma douleur. Il traine encore jusqu'aux rivages où j'ai pensé te fuir. Plus loin, je m'enfonce plus loin vers l'intérieur des terres. Le voyage est difficile car il n'y a plus de route. Il me faut des journées entières pour franchir des distances infimes. J'aimerais tant pouvoir changer cet atlas contre un autre.*

Les sentiments changent un peu, au grès des images qui changent elles aussi. Et l'autre revient, par moments, hanter tous les paysages… Comment *traiter* les retours de l'absent – comme on dit « le retour du refoulé » –, quand « la souffrance retrouve son territoire » ?, comme le dit si bien Frédéric Mitterrand.

Dans ma lecture, l'auteur constitue une archive dans laquelle conserver l'absent. Parfois, le film fini, ce traitement, cette cure, pourra porter ses fruits et libérer le cinéaste blessé…

Les éléments de cette archive seront les images et les sons dans lesquels l'absent trouvera une place, et une survie, dès lors détachée du cinéaste, car l'absence de toute manière ne saurait se résoudre au passé, au contraire, elle se maintient dans le présent continu de l'archive.

Reprenons Derrida et son entrée en matière étymologique sur l'archive. *Arkhé* renvoie à deux principes : là où les choses commencent (comme *archétype*), là où des hommes commandent (comme *archevêque*). Et aussi, *archeion*, soit la demeure des magistrats supérieurs, qui sont les gardiens des documents officiels, mais qui avaient aussi le pouvoir d'interpréter les archives.

Cela aide à comprendre les diverses dimensions de la notion d'archive qui ont toutes une place dans nos films. « Demeure des magistrats supérieurs », donc domicile, mais aussi, passage du privé au public, car ils interprètent les documents pour la société, ils coordonnent « un système ou une synchronie dans laquelle tous les éléments articulent l'unité d'une configuration idéale. Dans une archive, il ne doit pas y avoir de dissociation absolue. […] Le principe de l'archive est aussi un principe de consignation, c'est-à-dire de rassemblement »,[17] dit Derrida. « Passage du privé au public » : la poétique des films que j'ai traité s'articule exactement sur ce registre de partage de l'intime…

Ainsi, pour faire de l'ordre dans le fouillis de la tragédie familiale, habitée par l'absence, pas encore archivée du père, Clémence Hébért revient sur les lieux de son enfance. Elle filme la maison aujourd'hui, et les images d'antan, en super 8, viennent parasiter son film, cherchant à prendre une place ordonnée dans une archive. Des fantômes qui n'auraient pas encore trouvé le juste repos. L'auteure leur trouve une place, sur une bande-son d'aujourd'hui, entre un plan et l'autre, dans le tissu solide d'un champ et contre-champs.

Dans le même ordre d'idée, Maryse Chartrand, dans le film déchirant *Le Voyage d'une vie* (2007) est aux prises avec le deuil terrible de son mari qui s'est suicidé, au retour du voyage autour du monde que le couple et leurs enfants viennent de terminer. Ils ont filmé en voyage, pour faire un film au retour, tous ensemble. Mais c'est un autre film que Maryse Chartrand devra faire. Sur des images de plages caribéennes, des oiseaux plongeant dans l'eau, les sons en prise directe encore dans le film, la voix-over de Chartrand nous parle, certes, mais elle lui parle surtout, au *tu* : « Il y a le documentaire qu'on voulait faire, et puis aujourd'hui, il y a celui que je dois faire. Heureusement avec les images que tu as captées autour du monde, je peux refaire notre voyage, dans l'espoir de m'aider dans la traversée d'aujourd'hui ».

Aux prises avec le manque d'un être dont on ne peut pas contrôler les apparitions, les retours, le partage du sensible à venir, on peut parfois tenter de créer. Une action : l'écriture comme réparation, Freud le savait. Mais encore mieux créer des images, les prendre, prendre des images pour pouvoir les contrôler, elles, oui, on l'a dit. Les contrôler, les garder, les reprendre, les garder prêt de soi et les repousser loin, dans une boite, dans le tiroir de l'éloignement pour se reposer, pour laisser la place à autre chose, à d'autres êtres.

Afin d'interroger la nature de l'acte de l'archive Derrida parle de Freud. Filons la suite des renvois. Freud parle de Jansen. Jansen nous raconte Hanold. Hanold est un personnage fictif. Il est en manque, il souffre de l'absence de *Gradiva*. Le pansement pour sa souffrance ce sont ces moments de délire, où celui-ci se mêlant au rêve remédie au manque, et fait apparaître celle qui n'était qu'une idée issue d'une empreinte dans un bas-relief, qu'Hanold avait vu dans un musée…

Mais, nous, les vivants, qui dans les rêveries ne pouvons pas faire apparaître les phantasmes au gré de nos désirs, que pouvons-nous faire, pour combler la perte ? Nous ne pouvons que l'accepter. Pour ce faire nous devons imposer des contours à la douleur d'abord, faire de l'ordre, et limiter l'absence qui déborde partout chez nous, la limiter, la contrôler, la mettre en boite, la conserver, lui donner une place, pour pouvoir la retrouver : une archive, c'est bien cela.

Sans vouloir effacer l'absence, ce qui mènerait inévitablement sur le chemin du chagrin sans fin,[18] le travail fait dans le voyage, c'est un éloignement du trop-plein du souvenir de la personne, car on fait transiter les traces en dehors de la célébration du souvenir. On n'est pas dans les objets quotidiens, à contempler les restes de celui qui est disparu, mais on est dans ces films dans l'action d'une démarche de survie, et même de vie. Les traces de l'autre apparaissent, oui, mais restent comme collées à un ailleurs filmé.

Alors que Jensen dans son récit de fiction montrait un personnage qui s'obstinait à faire revivre l'absent dans le fantasme, tâche vouée à l'échec paranoïaque, nos films entreprennent un éloignement de la chose perdue…

Si l'acte de l'écriture comme réparation avait déjà été expliqué par Freud, celui de filmer, cet autre acte personnel, avec nos camera stylos, peut lui aussi être considéré comme réparateur.

Il reste à se demander si de regarder ces films tient aussi de l'acte réparateur. Et non seulement – comme dans *Douleur exquise* – car la douleur des autres nous fait relativiser la nôtre, mais parce que devant ces films nous sommes devant une découverte archivistique. Ces films nous enseignent comment sortir un objet – notre « objet petit a »[19] – du trop-plein de l'absence, et comment le classer dans un lieu loin et fermé.

Atlas loci de la mémoire, ces films nous permettent, si nous voulons bien leur laisser la place de le faire, de voir une thérapie à l'œuvre et son accomplissement.

J'aime penser alors aux voyageurs qui se mettent en scène dans des films comme ceux que j'ai cité, et aux spectateurs blessés qui les regardent, comme à Vincent Dieutre, après un mélancolique pèlerinage dans une Allemagne toute en grisaille, sur les ormes des ses amants disparus, dans *Mon voyage d'hiver* (2003). Le cinéaste, à la fin de son *voyage d'hiver*, est désormais en « rémission de chagrin »[20]… Dans les dernières images, les souvenirs douloureux, dont les blessures ne peuvent être laissées trop longtemps béantes, sont tous déjà passés sur le corps du voyageur, et de son neveu qui l'accompagne. Cette incarnation des souvenirs, d'abord dans le corps qui se remémore et souffre et ensuite dans ces lieux du passé dans lesquels ils vont rester, est illustrée par un long fondu enchainé sur une image d'un mur (du Mur). Au début du plan, le réalisateur s'éloigne en abandonnant sa valise derrière lui : « déjà mes doigts commencent à geler. Regarde, je frissonne. Je ne sais plus rien. Bientôt je ne ressentirai plus la douleur. Voilà le monde d'avant saisi par les glaces. Il s'efface. Je disparais avec lui. Alors souviens-toi de tout, je t'en prie, mon enfant, mon petit »…

Notes

[1] Ce texte s'inscrit dans le cadre d'une recherche rendue possible par une Bourse du Fond Québécois de la Recherche sur la Société et la Culture (FQRSC), 2010-2013. Je remercie Martin Bonnard, finissant de la maîtrise en Cinéma et images en mouvement de l'UQAM, pour sa collaboration à toutes les phases de la recherche dont ce texte constitue un passage.

[2] Richard Sennett, *Les Tyrannies de l'intimité*, Seuil, Paris 1995.

[3] Jacques Derrida, *Mal d'archive. Une impression freudienne*, Galilée, Paris 1995.

[4] Pour une filmographie préliminaire de référence, on pourra penser à : Maryse Chartrand, *Le Voyage d'une vie*, 2007 ; Sophie Calle, *Double Blind/No sex last night*, 1992 ; Sophie Calle, *Douleur exquise*, 2003 ; Frank Cole, *Life without Death*, 2003 ; Alain Cavalier, *Irène*, 2009 ; Vincent Dieutre, *Entering Indifference*, 2001 ; Vincent Dieutre, *Mon voyage d'hiver*, 2003 ; Vincent Dieutre, *Bologna centrale*, 2003 ; Vincent Dieutre, *Ti penso*, 2008 ; Denis Gheerbrant, *Lettre à Johan van der Keuken*, 2001 ; Clémence Hébért, *Le Bateau du père*, 2009 ; Alina Marazzi, *Un'ora sola ti vorrei*, 2002 ; Frédéric Mitterrand, *Lettres d'amour en Somalie*, 1981 ; Johan van der Keuken, *Les Vacances du cinéaste*, 1974 ; Johan van der Keuken, *Lucebert temps et adieux*, 1994 ; Johan van der Keuken, *Vacances prolongées*, 2000 ; Agnès Varda, *L'Univers de Jacques Demy*, 1995 ; Agnès Varda, *Quelques veuves de Noirmoutier*, 2005 ; Agnès Varda, *Les Plages d'Agnès*, 2008.

[5] Roger Odin, « Le Documentaire intérieur. Travail du JE et mise en phase dans *Lettres d'amour en Somalie* », dans *Cinémas*, vol. 4, n° 2, 1994, pp. 82-100.

[6] L'expression « rituels autobiographiques » est souvent employée par de Christine Macel, commissaire de l'exposition *M'as-tu vue*, à propos de Sophie Calle, au Centre Pompidou en 2003.

[7] Cette œuvre faisait partie de l'exposition *L'Île et moi*, d'Agnès Varda en 2005 à la Fondation Cartier à Paris.

[8] Pierre Fédida, *L'Absence*, Gallimard, Paris 1978.

[9] *Idem*, p. 7.

[10] *Ibidem*.

[11] Sophie Calle, *Douleur exquise*, Actes Sud, Paris 2003.

[12] Pierre Fédida, *L'Absence*, cit., p. 8.

[13] Pour une filmographie préliminaire, cf. note n. 4.

[14] Pierre Fédida, *L'Absence*, cit., p. 8. Plus loin : « Mais malheur à l'écriture qui ne compte pas avec le retour du refoulé ! L'objet absent tire force de sa projection – d'être jeté au-dehors – et c'est son essence qui lui attribue, en retour, existence ! Cette existence de l'absent a capacité de détruire la vie physique qui chercherait à s'en libérer ».

[15] *Idem*, p. 7.

[16] *Idem*, p. 8.

[17] Jacques Derrida, *Mal d'archive. Une impression freudienne*, cit., p. 14.

[18] Une absence ne se remplace pas par une présence, tout au plus les contours de l'absent s'estompent et reste un manque sans nom, une mélancolie, une blessure. L'on pourra relire le passage du commentaire magnifique de Chris Marker, dans *Sans soleil*, que j'ai cité en exergue de ce texte.

[19] Pour Lacan, « l'objet petit *a* » représente non un objet de la satisfaction mais au contraire un objet du manque, un objet que le sujet ne retrouvera jamais plus et qui sera la cause de son désir, toujours insatisfait.

[20] C'est une expression que Mitterrand utile vers la fin des *Lettres*.

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Chronographie secrète. L'Archive inquiétée par le silence

> *On croit que selon son désir on changera autour de soi les choses, on le croit parce que, hors de là, on ne voit aucune solution favorable. On ne pense pas à celle qui se produit le plus souvent et qui est favorable aussi : nous n'arrivons pas à changer les choses selon notre désir, mais peu à peu notre désir change.*
> Marcel Proust, *À la recherche du temps perdu*, 1925

On se propose ici, derrière ce titre indécis et peut-être mystérieux, d'envisager l'archive comme une simple idée de cinéma, et plus particulièrement comme une notion esthétique qui se voit interrogée à la fois par la question de l'enregistrement – et donc de la conservation, provoquée dès l'impression sur pellicule – et la question du défilement, inhérente au dispositif de projection et qui produit ce qu'on a pu qualifier de « matière du cinéma » : ce quelque chose d'évanescent qui, à peine établi, a aussitôt le loisir de s'échapper. Pour cela, il s'agira plus précisément de provoquer un détour de la pensée et d'observer les caractéristiques d'une esthétique qui a souvent, dans ses traités, pensé l'image – fixe en l'occurrence – sur le mode du labile et de l'impermanent : l'esthétique chinoise, choisie non pas parce qu'elle serait exclusive dans cette approche du temps et de la durée, mais plutôt parce que le point de départ des questionnements qui vont suivre n'est ni une question philosophique, ni même un exercice d'esthétique, mais avant tout un certain nombre d'objets filmiques d'Asie Orientale qu'il serait peut-être intéressant – et c'est là le questionnement de ce texte – d'interroger par des concepts de la pensée chinoise, qu'il s'agira de se ré-approprier et d'investir dans un cadre analytique cinématographique.

Le développement s'articule dès lors en trois points : (1) Dans un premier temps, il s'agira d'établir une brève analyse de l'écart entre la conception occidentale et la conception traditionnelle chinoise du *temps*, en mettant en évidence d'emblée que ces conceptions ne sont pas à essentialiser, puisqu'il n'y a pas *une* pensée occidentale, et *une* pensée chinoise. Ce qui ressortira cependant, c'est d'une certaine façon une sorte « d'impensé occidental », comme peut l'appeler le philosophe et sinologue François Jullien, qui a fait de la Chine un levier théorique capable d'*inquiéter* la philosophie occidentale et de « la porter à soupçonner ce à quoi elle n'a pas songé ».[1] (2) Il s'agira ensuite de « transformer » cette question du temps en question de cinéma, c'est-à-dire en problème d'image. En ce sens, il s'agira d'envisager le cinéma comme forme de pensée et de voir s'il est possible d'utiliser les concepts chinois, et même l'art traditionnel chinois – peinture et calligraphie principalement –, pour envisager le cinéma d'Asie Orientale (ou le cinéma tout court ?) autrement. (3) Enfin, pour illustrer le propos

– mais également pour revenir à son point de départ, là où s'est posé le problème – il s'agira d'évoquer un cinéaste, et plus particulièrement un extrait de film où les éléments théoriques avancés peuvent s'articuler et former les prémices d'un projet de recherche qui ne fait en réalité que commencer.

L'Écart

Pour analyser l'écart entre la conception chinoise du temps et notre conception, François Jullien avance d'abord l'idée de la *transition*. Selon lui, la transition « fait littéralement trou dans la pensée européenne ».[2] Et cela serait évident déjà chez Platon, qui ne saisit pas le passage entre un état et un autre, entre l'immobilité et la mobilité par exemple. Pour Platon, soit on est assis, soit on marche ; on ne peut participer en même temps à l'un *et* à l'autre. De même, Aristote ne pouvait définir un état intermédiaire qu'en le situant par rapport aux extrêmes : le gris était donc noir par rapport au blanc et ce même gris était blanc par rapport au noir. Cela s'expliquerait, selon François Jullien, par le fait que la philosophie grecque pense en termes d'Être, alors que la pensée chinoise est passée à côté de l'Être. La pensée chinoise propose en effet deux termes : « modification-continuation », qui peuvent être traduits par « modification *d'où* continuation » ou « modification *mais* continuation » ; le fait de ne pas distinguer « d'où » et « mais » est déjà intéressant. François Jullien dit, à ce propos :

> *D'une part, ces deux termes s'opposent, la modification à la continuation : la modification « bifurque » et la continuation « poursuit », l'une « innove » et l'autre « hérite ». Mais de l'autre, et en même temps, chacun des termes marque la condition de l'autre : c'est grâce à la « modification » que le procès engagé ne s'épuise pas mais, se renouvelant par elle, peut « continuer » ; et, réciproquement, c'est la continuité, ou plutôt la continuation, qui permet de « communiquer » au travers même de la « modification » qui survient et fait d'elle aussi un temps de passage.*[3]

Cette étude de la transition chez le sinologue intervient dans un petit ouvrage intitulé *Les Transformations silencieuses*. Or c'est précisément cette question de la « transformation silencieuse » qui permettra ici de poser ce problème de temps comme problème d'image : la philosophie grecque de l'Être implique aussi l'idée de forme – et de forme idéale – alors que penser en termes de transition, et de « modification-continuation » semble plutôt impliquer l'idée non pas de forme, mais de *trans*formation, de mutation.

Problème d'image

Il est intéressant de noter que pour représenter le temps, explique l'écrivain François Cheng, les peintres ont utilisé deux procédés : la calligraphie d'un poème dans le tableau, relatant « une expérience vécue ou rêvée »[4] et le dispositif du rouleau, qui fonctionne par déploiement dans le temps. Mais plus fondamentalement, le souci de représenter le temps se traduisait chez les peintres chinois dans les aspects formels même du tracé, dans la technique et la matière même utilisée. François Jullien écrit à ce propos : « c'est au lavis d'encre, au seul jeu de variation du pâle au foncé, et du sec à l'humide, 'entre il y a - il n'y a pas', que le Lettré chinois confiera de rendre le caractère évanescent des choses, en cours d'émergence ou de résorption [...] ».[5]

Dans *Cette étrange idée du beau*, Jullien se propose également de décrire l'écart évoqué plus haut en termes de matières et de formes, dans une comparaison un peu schématique qui pose d'une part la technique « occidentale » et d'autre part la technique « chinoise » :

> *Non pas la couleur, substance pâteuse, matière épaisse, mais l'encre, plus ou moins diluée, variant entre le clair et le foncé et se laissant absorber de façon diffuse, en aura ; non pas la forme épurée par le dessin et devenant idéale, mais le pinceau à la pointe souple oscillant continûment dans un sens ou dans l'autre, appuyant ou relevé, bondissant ou ramassé, s'incurvant ou acéré, conduit d'un « poignet plein » lui permettant de s'appesantir ou d'un « poignet vide » qui fait « voler et danser », et qui jamais ne revient sur son tracé. Ce pinceau « évoluant et pivotant », sans cesse « modifiant » son cours pour y renouveler son dynamisme et « continuer » d'avancer, échappe à l'enlisement dans ce qui serait alors inévitablement de la « matérialité » ou de la « forme » complètement actualisée et devenue rigide.*[6]

Au-delà de la technique de réalisation, qui reste dans une certaine mesure un problème de dispositif (même s'il pose en l'occurrence une question essentielle de *matière*), cette question du temps peut se poser dans les postures mêmes de l'artiste et du spectateur face à la peinture. Pour François Cheng, par exemple, c'est même dans l'œuvre achevée – c'est-à-dire inachevée – que s'exprime la question du temps : les artistes chinois manifestaient en effet un souci de « laisser au tableau son autonomie organique, ainsi que sa chance d'accomplir de lui-même, en tant qu'entité vivante, son destin temporel ». Son explication, et les exemples qu'il donne, sont d'un grand intérêt :

> *Ainsi, dans un tableau, les arbres et les fleurs, par exemple, tout en incarnant le temps vécu par le peintre, doivent-ils donner l'impression de continuer leur propre cycle de croissance ou de décroissance. Pour un paysage de plus ample dimension et impliquant une durée plus cosmique, l'artiste a souci également d'y introduire l'idée de transformations internes et de faire sentir, par exemple, que l'eau peut virtuellement s'évaporer en nuage et qu'inversement le nuage peut virtuellement retomber en eau, ou encore que les montagnes sont capables à la longue de se muer en vagues et les vagues de s'ériger en montagnes.*[7]

Or ce souci de mutation semble être, au mot près, ce qui dans le cinéma intéressait par exemple Jean Epstein, qui avait formulé son souci d'expérimenter avec le temps comme matière. Et c'est là que semble commencer la résonance entre le cinéma, comme forme de pensée du temps, et les concepts traditionnels chinois. Car penser le temps comme expérience de la conscience (Bergson) et dire que cette expérience peut être dans les images (Epstein), c'est envisager le cinéma lui-même comme phénomène visuel perceptif et inciter à interroger l'image en termes phénoménologiques, comme présence qui crée des sensations temporelles. Or, comme le note François Jullien, et comme on peut aussi le constater à la lecture du *Bifaji*, traité de peinture chinoise de Jing Hao (théoricien et peintre du X^{ème} siècle), l'examen de la pensée chinoise de l'image met d'abord en évidence que la langue chinoise ne distingue pas les termes « image » et « phénomène » (*xiang*), et donc qu'elle « ne sépare jamais entièrement le fait d'advenir (comme phénomène) de celui de reproduire (comme image) ».[8] Ensuite, comme chez Bergson, la pensée chinoise du temps est en fait une pensée de la durée (on retrouve aussi en Chine le « moment saisonnier ») et n'oppose pas le temporel à l'éternel.[9] De même, comme chez Bergson, la Chine ne pense pas le passé, le présent, le futur (il n'y a d'ailleurs pas de conjugaison dans la langue chinoise), mais la durée, la mémoire, l'évanescence. Ces correspondances ne font au final que multiplier les questionnements sur ce curieux dialogue qui peut se poser entre la pensée traditionnelle chinoise et le cinéma comme forme de pensée du temps.

Reste ceci dit cette ambivalence du cinéma, annoncée en introduction : sa logique de mouvement, de défilement, capable de figurer l'impermanence des choses, parce qu'il est possible au cinéma d'expérimenter avec le temps *comme matière*, et donc d'envisager l'objet filmique comme quelque chose de matériellement évanescent, non seulement au moment de la projection, mais également dans son support pellicule, fragile, instable et translucide. Mais d'un autre côté, il y a également sa logique photographique d'enregistrement, d'archivage et de conservation : c'est effectivement en tombant sur une vieille photographie ou sur un vieux film que les « transformations silencieuses » évoquées plus haut deviennent criantes. C'est dans la mise en regard de deux temps différents, et dans l'obturation de la transition qui les lie, que peuvent nous revenir en pleine face les écarts entre les temps, les bouleversements de l'histoire et les trous de la mémoire.

Il semble qu'en esthétique chinoise, il y ait une attention toute particulière portée sur le silence des transformations, que ce soit en pensée (c'est-à-dire là où on pense les phénomènes en termes de transition) ou en arts visuels, où il s'agit de peindre les mutations secrètes et la lente métamorphose des choses du monde. C'est ici que peut probablement s'élaborer un nouveau cadre analytique dans l'observation de certains films d'Asie Orientale, et plus spécifiquement ceux qui apportent une forme de « solution cinématographique » à cette ambivalence.

Hou Hsiao-hsien

Vient à l'esprit, assez rapidement, le style du cinéaste taiwanais Hou Hsiao-hsien, pour qui la question de la durée et de la mémoire sont centrales, autant sur le plan narratif (sa manière très particulière de raconter une histoire tout en la faisant « couler de source ») que sur le plan pictural, marqué d'une forme délicate de labilité. Il est intéressant de ce point de vue de noter que dans ses films, et notamment ceux qui sont autobiographiques, Hou Hsiao-hsien insiste sur cette dimension de l'impermanence, liée à l'histoire de son pays. Dans *Un temps pour vivre, un temps pour mourir* (1985) par exemple, il fait dire à sa mère, à propos de son père : « Il n'achetait que des meubles en bambou. Non seulement ce n'était pas cher, mais en plus on pouvait les laisser si on partait ».

Hou Hsiao-hsien réalise en 2005 le film *Three Times*, qui raconte trois histoires d'amour à des époques différentes (1966, 1911 et 2005) en faisant à chaque fois jouer les deux protagonistes par les deux mêmes acteurs (Shu Qi et Chang Chen). Ce film est intéressant à plusieurs égards, et notamment parce qu'on peut y voir une sorte de « synthèse » d'une grande partie de la filmographie du réalisateur. Voyons ici le premier épisode, « Le temps des amours », qui se déroule en 1966 et qui correspond aux propres souvenirs de Hou Hsiao-hsien. Il raconte l'histoire d'un amour provisoire, presque interchangeable : Chen, un jeune conscrit se rend régulièrement dans une salle de billard ; on comprend qu'il a de l'affection pour Haruko, l'animatrice de la salle à qui il envoie des lettres quand il s'absente. Mais le métier d'animatrice de salle de billard fonctionne par cycle : Haruko change donc de salle de billard, et c'est May qui la remplace. Chen revient à la salle de billard et se rend compte que Haruko est partie. Petit à petit, il s'éprend de May, qui quelque temps après, change également de salle de billard. Chen décide alors d'aller à sa recherche pour partager un moment avec elle avant de repartir au service militaire.

Hou Hsiao-hsien semble constituer un cas contemporain étonnant de ce rendez-vous entre dispositif cinématographique et pensée chinoise traditionnelle. Ceci dit, on verra qu'il ne s'agit pas de se soumettre passivement à une tradition arrêtée : le cinéma de Hou réfléchit comme la peinture chinoise sur l'écoulement silencieux du temps et la mutation discrète des phénomènes, mais n'hésite pas, échappant à certaines analyses de François Jullien, à rendre les transformations criantes et manifestes, politiques et culturelles.[10]

On peut effectivement regarder ce premier épisode de *Three Times* à la lumière de la conception chinoise de la durée. On retrouve alors les expressions « mutations secrètes » (François Cheng) ou « transformations silencieuses » (François Jullien) que l'on vient d'évoquer. Pour François Jullien, « la force de la transformation silencieuse, force insidieuse, est qu'elle en vient à faire paraître aujourd'hui comme allant de soi, complètement absorbé par la situation et passant sans mot dire, sans qu'on ait à le remarquer, ce qui auparavant nous aurait fait si sincèrement protester, tellement c'était impossible [...] ».[11]

Or c'est précisément la sensation que l'on peut avoir en visionnant les films de Hou Hsiao-hsien, et celui-ci en particulier : c'est-à-dire la sensation que les choses changent secrètement, sans raison apparente, sans pathos ni bouleversement prononcé. Pourtant, Chen, qui écrivait ses lettres à Haruko cesse de le faire et puis se met à écrire à May. Que s'est-il passé entre ces deux moments ? Le spectateur aura sans doute des difficultés à le décrire en termes de « moments ».

En y regardant de près, on peut voir qu'une des stratégies scénaristiques a été de construire le dispositif narratif sur le mode de la transition. C'est-à-dire, par progression lente : par exemple en faisant lire à May une lettre qui était adressée à Haruko. Ensuite, en termes de mise en scène, le passage de Haruko à May concentre dans son déroulement la plupart des caractéristiques connues du style de Hou : plans-séquences, point de vue relativement éloigné, fluidité des mouvements de caméra, etc.

Autour de la table de billard, la délicatesse des mouvements de caméra, embrayés par les élans des billes sur le drap feutré, donne à voir un jeu d'émergence et de résorption dans l'espace, minutieusement et intelligemment éclairé. Entre l'imprévisible et l'inéluctable, le visage de May se dessine hors du noir, apparaissant silencieusement, et dans une forme de fadeur surprenante, puis dans une forme de continuité paradoxalement épisodique, se propose comme un *passage naturel*, un *changement qui coule de source*. Hou Hsiao-hsien dépeint donc précisément cette *transition*, qui fonctionne ici sur le mode de la fluidité, où un plan trouve résonance dans celui qui le suit, comme s'il continuait de s'y dérouler. Le tout s'imprègne de ce qu'on peut qualifier de dimension chronographique : une dimension, relativement secrète, où il s'agit, par le mouvement et l'inscription dans l'espace, de ne figurer dans la durée filmique rien d'autre que ce qui importait dès le départ les peintres traditionnels chinois : l'impression de *continuer*. Le passage d'un état à l'autre, de Haruko à May, et la façon dont Hou Hsiao-hsien met en scène cette transition souligne enfin la formule du *Classique du changement*, un des livres fondateurs de la pensée chinoise traditionnelle : « épuisement d'où modification, modification d'où continuation, continuation d'où durée ».

On a donc un cas, semble-t-il, où la question du temps et de la durée, bien qu'elle concerne la mémoire, au lieu de se formuler en termes de conservation et de trace, se formule plutôt en termes d'impermanence et de tracé. Il s'agirait enfin d'envisager la possibilité pour le cinéma, parce qu'il est un art du mouvement, d'être, dans sa logique même, un art de la transformation, de la métamorphose, où les phénomènes peuvent se faire et se défaire aussitôt, avec ce nouvel enjeu, qui tenterait d'échapper au vacarme de l'évènement : l'enjeu de rendre compte du silence du temps, et donc d'écrire le temps sans les traces des ruptures, mais grâce au tracés de la transition.

Notes

[1] François Jullien, *La Philosophie inquiétée par la pensée chinoise*, Seuil, Paris 2009, p. II.

[2] François Jullien, *Les Transformations silencieuses*, Grasset, Paris 2009.

[3] *Ibidem*.

[4] François Cheng, *Souffle-Esprit. Textes théoriques chinois sur l'art pictural*, Seuil, Paris 1989.

[5] François Jullien, *La Grande Image n'a pas de forme*, Seuil, Paris 2003, rééd. dans l'opus *La Philosophie inquiétée par la pensée chinoise*, cit., p. 506.

[6] François Jullien, *Cette étrange idée du beau*, Grasset & Fasquelle, Paris 2010, p. 94.

[7] François Cheng, *Souffle-Esprit. Textes théoriques chinois sur l'art pictural*, cit.

[8] François Jullien, *La Grande Image n'a pas de forme*, cit., p. 547.

[9] François Jullien, *La Philosophie inquiétée par la pensée chinoise*, cit., p. 668.

[10] Le film *Three Times* est lui-même un grand dispositif de ruptures : bien que chacune de ses parties soit dépeinte, comme on va le voir, sur le mode de la *fluidité*, le fait de juxtaposer trois temps (et de remettre en question leur ordre chronologique : 1966 puis 1911 puis 2005) inquiète le silence du temps, rendant en l'occurrence les transformations culturelles absolument frappantes (notamment sur la question de l'écriture et de la communication). Persiste pourtant une forme transitoire qui se trace à travers tout le film, anachronique sans pour autant qu'elle ne soit surprenante : ce sont les deux mêmes acteurs qui jouent les protagonistes.

[11] François Jullien, *Les Transformations silencieuses*, cit., pp. 113-114.

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Mapping the Mother's Death: the Limits of the Personal Archive

In her book on experimental ethnography, Catherine Russell noted that staging the encounter between the artists and their parents or grandparents is a recurrent theme in many contemporary self-representational films. For her, "the difference between generations is written across the filmmaker's own inscription in technology. [...] One often gets the sense that the filmmaker has no memory and is salvaging his or her own past through the recording of family memory."[1] This may apply to two of the three artists whose works will be discussed here. Yet, it could also be argued that the so-called autobiographical endeavour goes well beyond what Russell calls the salvaging of memory. Rather than building an archive, it consists perhaps more in revisiting the latter and overtaking it to reclaim the space of the absent ones, namely, the mothers. The three works examined here do not bare much similarity with each other in their form and aesthetic approach, yet they do in their subject matter, for all revolve around the death of the authors' mother.

Sophie Calle's *Rachel, Monique* is best described as a multimedia installation about her mother who died in 2006 of breast cancer. It was created for the site under construction at the Palais de Tokyo in Paris and was presented in November 2010. The installation combined photographs, objects and several videos, including one of Rachel as she lay on her deathbed.[2] In a very different style, French documentary-maker Mariana Otero focuses in *Histoire d'un secret* (2003) on her mother Clotilde who died in 1968 of the consequences of an abortion, at the time still illegal in France. Otero and her sister Isabel only learnt about their mother's death a year after she had died, and only discovered the full truth from their father over twenty years later. This documentary shares many similarities with *Un'ora sola ti vorrei* (2002), a film by Alina Marazzi about her mother Luisa who committed suicide in 1972, having spent seven years in and out of psychiatric hospitals for severe depression. While *Histoire d'un secret* follows an investigative documentary structure, Marazzi relies heavily on her family's extensive collection of 16mm and 8mm home movies, dating back as early as 1926, and on Luisa's letters and diaries.

Mourning: to Fill the Gap

The therapeutic value of these films and installation is obvious as indeed, they partake of the artists' work of mourning whose process consists in filling the gap left by the death of the mother. As Michael Renov eloquently summarises: "death opens up a hole in the (Lacanian) Real that will be filled with a 'swarm of images' having perhaps ritual or therapeutic value."[3]

However, the void that each of these artists is striving to fill is of a different nature. Calle is mourning Rachel's recent death while paying a tribute to her in her art, as she usually does with her own personal life, whereas Otero and Marazzi barely, if at all, remember their respective mothers, whom they lost in early childhood. It seems instead that their films provide a space for rediscovery of these women, to retrieve them from oblivion and thus to lift the taboo covering their death. In other words, the void to be filled is brought forward in a physical and topological dimension. This somehow answers the need to compensate for the impossibility to grasp the abstraction of death.

Mapping the Absence

This mapping of their loss similarly takes a different shape for each of them. Calle takes over the exhibition space of a site under construction, which she transforms into a crypt in memory of Rachel (fig. 54). She introduces the installation as following:

> *She was successively called Rachel, Monique, Szyndler, Calle, Pagliero, Gonthier, Sindler. My mother liked people to talk about her. Her life does not appear in my work. It used to irritate her. When I placed my camera by her deathbed, because I was afraid she might pass away in my absence, whilst I wanted to be there, hear her last words, she exclaimed: "At last."*[4]

Photographs of gravestones with the inscription "mother" in several languages lay on the floor; another one on the wall shows Rachel in her coffin with her favourite belongings (fig. 55). As was to be expected with Calle, she transforms a tragic and macabre event into a theatre of irony. Mariana Otero returns to the places of her childhood to reconstruct the jigsaw of Clotilde's story, so that, by piecing together family's and friends' testimonies, she follows the trace of a woman she hardly knew (fig. 56). The second part of the film, which had hitherto focused on the revelation of the secret, shifts into the social investigation about the taboo of illegal abortion. While the film is by no means a detective story, it nevertheless takes the shape of an investigative search for clues, which involves a simultaneous temporal and topographic mapping. This enables Otero to place Clotilde's story back in a larger social landscape. In addition, Clotilde was considered to be a promising painter at the time of her death and her work takes consequently a significant place in the film, which ultimately becomes a tribute to her brief artistic career. *Histoire d'un secret* concludes with a retrospective exhibition of her works. As a result, just as for Calle, Otero takes over the exhibition space to stage a tribute to Clotilde, not to say a public reburial.

The situation in *Un'ora sola ti vorrei* is different because of the already existing material that Marazzi had at her disposal. The film is thus a patchwork of the family's archive footage, close-ups of her mother's handwritten letters and notebooks, as well as of medical reports from her sojourns in hospital (fig. 57). As for the soundtrack, it is composed of music, in particular several versions of the popular song[5] that gives its title to the film, added background sounds, and the director's voice over as she reads abstracts of her mother's letters and diaries. The film also opens with what sounds like an imaginary letter written by Luisa and sent to her daughter from beyond the grave. While, generally speaking, film is a space of inscription in its own right, it takes on a particular resonance here. What is at stake for Marazzi is not so much to mark a space as it is to make sense of and free herself from the already existing archive material. *Un'ora sola ti vorrei* is consequently the space itself in which she can imprint her own perspective by manipulating and editing the images shot by her grandfather.

Inscription in Time and Space

All three artists are *literally* inscribing their loss into time and space, be it that of the film print or of the significantly provisory space of a building site. In Calle's case, it can furthermore be argued that, contrary to the above comment about inscription, the installation is gone and that the use of a space under construction emphasises all the more the temporal finitude, not only of the exhibition, but also of life itself. Of course. And it may well have been the intention. Nonetheless, Rachel's presence has been inscribed for eternity in the very foundations of the building precisely because it is under construction as if she were buried there. The handwritten inscriptions on the bare walls accompanying some of the works are reminiscent of the messages characteristic of shabby public toilets or squatted buildings: *Rachel was here*, as it were (fig. 58). The need for typographic inscription harks back to Derrida's point whereby printing, among other types of inscription, is constitutive of the archive. Interestingly, the typographic trace also has a very strong significance in Marazzi's film as she inserts close-ups of her mother's diaries and letters. These are a small *matri-archive*, as Derrida puts it, that is, the only physical trace of her mother not involving the external gaze of the camera holder in the family footage. At the same time, close-up shots of clinical reports about her illness constitute a literal archive of her internment in the psychiatric hospital. In *Histoire d'un secret*, Clotilde is imprinted on the film through her paintings, which, more than the old black and white photographs shown in the film, more than all possible relatives' testimonies, bear the very traces of her hands, of the brushstrokes left on the canvas as an indexical trace of her having-been-there. Derrida argues that with printing, the archive is entrusted "to an *external* support."[6] Yet the question is for him as to where this outside begins, a question which amounts to that of the archive itself, adding that "[t]here is no archive without a place of consignment, without a technique of repetition and without a certain exteriority. No archive without outside."[7]

Whether or not these artists are creating an archive remains open. In any case, they are taking their loss to an external place and, as far as Sophie Calle is concerned, one could say a very cold place, for she travelled to the *North Pole* in 2008 to bury (on the Northern Glacier) some of Rachel's belongings (fig. 59). The installation combines video and colour photographs retracing the trip as well as porcelain plaques with the following text:

> *She [Rachel] had a dream. Go to the North Pole. […]*
> *I never had this dream. It was hers. But I was invited to go to the North Pole. And maybe I went a little for her. To take her there.*
> *In my suitcase : a photo, a necklace, a ring.*
> *I chose a portrait of her in the snow. Winter holidays.*
> *Her white and red Chanel necklace. I grew up with those pearls around her neck.*
> *And her diamond ring. During the war my grandfather, running away from the Germans to hide in the mountains of Grenoble, afraid a building he owned would be seized, exchanged it for a diamond ring. Not a good deal. My grandmother did not talk to him for a year.*
> *So I waited to reach the most northern place of this trip, where I could go ashore with my mother.*

As touching as this gesture may be, Calle also plays ironically and ambiguously with the fetishizing of memory: on one hand, by leaving objects in the North Pole she once again says, *Mum was here*, thus materialising spatial anchorage. On the other hand, she thumbs her nose at her grandfather by leaving behind the diamond ring – among other extremely valuable objects – which has such a symbolic meaning in the family history.

Patriarchive

This detail, far from insignificant, once again brings us back to Derrida. *Patriarchive* defines for him, among other things, the link between topology and nomology (the latter being related to law and commandment). He also points out that in Plato's *Timaeus*, the archive tends to be associated with the male:

> *As for the race of men (*genos anthropôn*), the Egyptian priest of the* Timæus *ascribes 'places' to it: these are places propitious to memory, to the conservation of archives, to writing and tradition, these tempered zones, which protect from destruction by excess of heat and cold (22e-23a).*[8]

One could play at length with the possible interpretations as to the cold place in which Calle dropped the family's jewels but such a digression would take us too far beyond the scope of this paper.

To come back to Otero and Marazzi, beyond the differences already mentioned, their films share a lot of uncanny similarities. Both films were released around the same time – respectively 2003 and 2002 – and, strangely enough, the two women were born within a year of each other. In addition, they both lost their mothers around the same age and time in history, 1968 for the first and 1972 for the latter, a period of dramatic social and political turmoil. Finally and more strikingly, both mothers died a taboo death: abortion for one, suicide for the other. As a result, the issue of the medical body takes on a particular resonance in their films. Similarly, each event can retrospectively be seen in its respective country as foreboding the drastic changes that were to be introduced in the following decade: i.e. the legalisation of abortion in France in 1975 and psychiatric reforms in Italy in 1978. In both cases, it is the father, Antonio (by an ironic twist of fate, both fathers bear the same name) who withholds the knowledge about the missing mother for many years and who eventually releases and transmits the information. In both cases, the respective mother's possessions, paintings, clothes, photographs for one, letters, notebooks, and so forth for the other, are kept in a chest, which, again, is given access to by the respective *Antonios*, as it were. In other words, the access to knowledge about the absent and invisible mother is controlled by the male, for, in keeping with Plato, the space of the archive, that is, of rule, knowledge and transmission, is that of the male. In its own way, each film points to the question, and associated problems, of transmission.

For Otero the issue is simple: she has no recollection of Clotilde and has to rely on that of elder relatives, hence her visits to father, sister, aunts, uncles and grandmother, which corroborates Russell's above quoted statement. For Marazzi, the situation is symmetrically opposite: the family appear on screen but only in the archive footage. The film includes very early reels so that she draws a genealogy of the family across three generations in a *mise en abyme* of the mother/daughter or parents/children relationship. The result is the portrait of a Milanese upper class family, which gives the illusion of a perfect world in which everyone appears as rich and beautiful. The film is thus not just about Luisa or how she died but also about her upbringing as Marazzi's treatment of the family archive stresses the fake perfection of that environment. As she slows down the movement, freezes the frames, assembles the images together with the text and sounds, the viewer gets a sense of unease, all the more so that the narrator explains that Luisa does not really fit that so-called perfect world.

Throughout the film and especially as the voice over reads from Luisa's teenage diaries, one senses her insecurity, the increasing tension between her and her parents and her growing resentment towards them. Several mentions of the director's grandmother making disparaging comments towards Luisa in her childhood punctuate the film. More strikingly, her depression does not seem to be taken seriously. Towards the end of the film, the narrator reads a letter from Luisa to her husband while she was in the clinic:

> *Being here last week seemed like a terrible punishment and I suffered so much. You can't imagine how much I felt like a punished little girl. I understood this today when I saw my father and mother and even though I felt happy to see them, I'm feeling outraged about several of Daddy's comments like: "you're my only problem, think of the money we're spending" and so on. And about how he blamed me for all my breakdowns. [...] The never ending quirk leitmotiv. [...] After he left, I realised that my feeling of imprisonment isn't caused by this place but by the teachings with which he underpinned my growing up and still wants to instil and that I rebel against deep within but so far I've never really managed not to believe in.*

This letter is also the statement of a crisis of transmission: a rupture of the link between parents and daughter which leads Luisa to feel in turn unable to transmit anything to her own children. In other words, this is also a crisis of the archive and of the *patriarchive*. Let us remind that these events took place in the late 1960's and, while there certainly is no mention of the 1968 social movements, the latter underpins Luisa's personal story, not to mention Clotilde's. Derrida rightly argues that the archive also entails the possibility of its own destruction, the possibility "of a radical perversion, precisely, a diabolical death drive, an aggression or a destruction drive: thus, a loss drive."[9] In a sense, Luisa's suicide embodies this radical perversion of the archive, the *mal d'archive* as it were.

Between Archive and Khôra

While Derrida is adamantly against any sort of analogical or metaphorical comparison, he notes that Plato tends to associate *Khôra* with mothering or nursing. Yet, what exactly is *Khôra*, or rather, what is it not? It cannot be fixed in a denomination or definition and the instability of *Khôra*, which cannot even be described as a concept, is already present in the *Timæus*. It is often described as a space, place or receptacle, hence the connection with the mother and nursing but here too, the comparisons are too reductive for Derrida; it is an *aporia,* which resists any sort of categorisation. It belongs to neither the sensible nor the intelligible but instead, to what he calls a third genre (*triton genos*). If archive means beginning, *Khôra* goes beyond the origin.

The point in bringing together the archive and *Khôra* is certainly not to establish a metaphoric opposition between the two in terms of male versus female. Instead, it could be argued that the works discussed here lie somewhere between an attempt to go beyond the archive and the strive for an impossible *something*. This something has perhaps to do with *Khôra* as it aptly points to the impossible desire to name and materialise, in other words *fix,* the void left by the mother's death. It is clear that this reflection goes beyond what may have been the authors' intention and as a consequence, the mother's function is envisaged here from a more instrumental perspective. In this sense, the cross-comparison of these works, in spite of their differences, opens up an interesting space for reflection and extrapolation as to the limits and insufficiency of the archive before death, which ought to be explored further.

Ultimately, when the attempt to materialise the mother's death reaches its limits, these works also provide a ground for the artists to reflect about their own practice, all the more so that they are self-referential. Otero and Marazzi are both attacking the taboo of what their family and/or society has deemed an embarrassing death.

Hence, the issue of illegal abortion brings Otero back to the core of her social and political concerns as a documentary-maker, in the same way as this personal film allows for Marazzi to question the efficiency of the psychiatric body through the reassessment and treatment of the image. Although it is not explicit in the films, they also offer a take on women's condition at a stage of *pre-feminist* awareness, as it were. Calle, while spatialising loss, is perpetuating the memory of her mother and placing herself in a future perfect tense by disseminating indexes from the Palais de Tokyo to the North Pole for future generations. In addition, including her mother's death in her work is one further, if not the ultimate, step in her autobiographical and self-fictional trajectory.[10] In other words, by reclaiming a space for the absent one, these women not only try to overcome their mother's death, but they also enable art to take place.

Illustrations

54. General view of Sophie Calle's exhibition *Rachel, Monique* in the site under construction at the Palais de Tokyo, Paris, 20/10/11 - 27/11/11.

55. View of the photograph installations *Mother* and *Cercueil* (on the wall). Sophie Calle, *Rachel, Monique*, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, 20/10/11 - 27/11/11.

56. Still of Mariana Otero and her sister Isabel peaking into their former family house in Mariana Otero, *Histoire d'un secret* (France, 2003).

57. Still of Luisa's notebooks and diaries in Alina Marazzi, *Un'ora sola ti vorrei* (Italy, 2002).

58. Rachel's location in the Montparnasse cemetery handwritten on the wall, next to the photograph of her coffin. Sophie Calle, *Rachel, Monique*, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, 20/10/11 - 27/11/11.

59. Photograph of the jewels dropped on the Northern Glacier in *North Pole* (2008). Sophie Calle, *Rachel, Monique*, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, 20/10/11 - 27/11/11.

Notes

[1] Catherine Russel, *Experimental Ethnography: the Work of Film in the Age of Video*, Duke University Press, Durham-London, 1999, p. 278.

[2] Calle had already presented this video at the Venice Biennale in 2007.

[3] Michael Renov, *The Subject of Documentary*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis-London, 2004, p. 124.

[4] My translation.

[5] Sung by Fedora Mingarelli in 1938 and covered in 1968 by a pop band called the Showmen.

[6] Jacques Derrida, *Mal d'archive: une impression freudienne*, Éditions Galilée, Paris 1995, p. 20 (my translation, as in all further quotations of the book).

[7] *Idem*, p. 26.

[8] Jacques Derrida, *Khôra*, Éditions Galilée, Paris, 1993, endnote no. 9, p. 104 (my translation).

[9] Jacques Derrida, *Mal d'archive: une impression freudienne*, cit., p. 23.

[10] The ultimate step for Calle would perhaps be to stage her own funeral instead just as she already staged her wedding.

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I Am still Alive. Archiving the Self, Time-Lapse Portrait, Images Souvenir

As soon as we came upon On Kawara's work in one of the rooms at the exhibition *ATLAS, How to carry the world on one's back?*, arranged by George Didi-Huberman, we realized this was what we were looking for as a starting point for our talk.[1] We have been reflecting for a long time on the autobiographical forms, and the self-portraits that populate our contemporary world. On Kawara is one amongst many, but more than anyone else, he shows the profound relationship across the vast field of subjective writings that urgently seek, or rather need an archive, and wish to file themselves, to put themselves away.

This Japanese artist offers a complex, conceptual work, which he began in January 1966, in New York, when he started producing his *Date paintings* (or the series *Today*).[2] Each day he prepared a wooden panel (there were eight predetermined formats from which he chose), and painted in white, on a monochrome background, the current date. The panel was then put into a handmade cardboard box together with a newspaper, or a press clipping from that day's press. Finally, each *date painting* was given a title and subtitled with a caption, which was either a personal reflection: "Today I decided to stay by myself," a headline from that day's newspaper: "Two students ill-treated in Santo Domingo," or simply the name of the weekday corresponding to the date. The language used was that of the place where he had painted the work, which is to say the place where Kawara happened to be living at the time. In addition, he noted down all the information relative to the process of making each individual *date painting* in his diary. This was a very complex, detailed process, and if he did not finish it by midnight, the painting was destroyed because it had not been completed on that day.

What is Kawara telling us? Where does he take us, if we also consider all his other works, in particular the series *I*? Kawara would send daily postcards from all over the place, in standard format, to friends and acquaintances, or even sometimes "I am still alive" telegrams, which he sent, and which do not communicate the terrible news of "someone who has died," but exactly the opposite: daily news of "someone who is still alive."

We can now move beyond On Kawara, and focus on our daily experience. There are countless autobiographic and self-portrayal trajectories that are intercepted by the media in the contemporary scenario. They seem to respond to a necessity, which often assumes the characteristics of a real urgency. Through the media (Social Network profiles, blogs, photo-galleries, time lapse portraits, chronologies, bookmarks, playlists), deposits of materials and subjective waste are left behind like imprints, digital trails of the self in an endless desire for new experiential dimensions. These self-designative gestures encompass a very particular ostensive will: a form of willingness that produces "*souvenir* images," strongly adrift towards an impersonal condition.[3] The *echolalia* of these subjective writings, which is a harsh repetition of ostensive gestures, produces atlases of memory images, which very much like souvenirs, become things, objects, fragments of material.

In a metonymic exercise, they provide an infinite set of different and similar pieces: denaturalized clones, object-images of the original self-portrayal event, which reify and redefine a living and durable experience.

The first acquisitions of our research project indicate that the autobiographical and self-portrayal proposals of new media delineate a shift from a certain form of personal individuation, to a form of impersonal singularization of life. In the first case, happenings are perceived and understood as predicates of a subject's life, whereas in the case of the impersonal singularization of life, accidents are transfigured in events, and settled in incorporate doubles: they configure otherness, in their being like an exposition of the "*homo tantum*."

Due to the infinite number of applicative possibilities they offer, new media rule out the very possibility of (or, better to say, the last and only horizon of) the planimetric perspective, as well as the Cartesian clarity that supported the history of early self-portraiture.

As a matter of fact, from the work of Alberto Boatto, to that of Franco Rella, and of the late Omar Calabrese,[4] we witness a history of self-portrayal set adrift, on the way to a worn-out *logos*, increasingly unable to voice the sudden vibes of the soul, and therefore, driving towards the territory of the impersonal.

However, the stocks of self-portraits that are stored in the digital world can no longer touch the strings of the portrayal of the soul. They cannot reach the histories and the states of a life, the true or false dimension of self-referentiality, thus, they no longer aim at the effect of belonging. They cannot aim anymore at the effect of belonging, since they are not *pictures of* someone, as they are actually *someone*.

This is because, what is subsumed from the phenomenology of self-portraiture is the mere valency of practice, exercise, and experiment. These are not so much self-portraits, as gestures of self-portraiture, ways of doing, rather than objects of saying: tensions between a subject and what from time to time (image, word, date painting, postcard, telegram, self-timer, posted file, etc.) becomes a trace of the self, which responds to a self-portraying attitude, rather than to the object of the self-portrait.

Starting from this inescapable importance of the self-portraying gesture on the self-portrait as object, our research group aims at building up an initial repertoire of self-portraying works and phenomena. While on the one hand, it appears that these works are not homogenous, on the other hand, they seem to succeed in defining a clear phenomenology of the current sense of self-portrayal.

As a matter of fact, the inhomogeneous nature of the corpus of our research fully depends on our natural predisposition to create a dialog among various forms and expressive fields. Special attention is given to those artistic experiences that are typical of the combination of conceptual art with the most recent digital solutions offered by the Internet. We are convinced that the putting together of differing and heterogeneous practices makes it possible to realize that the esthetic workability of images coincides with the meaning of contemporary self-portraiture. The latter is set free of the materiality of the means of communication, since form and style are disposed to their deletion. This kind of idea inspired Rancière in the constituting of what he calls "imaginity." For it seems that the gesture (apart from its technical and material nature that still needs to be explored in a vast clutter of acts from the sketch to the shot) can lead On Kawara to say something about the new technologies of the Self – an almost kind of "crosstalk," a reflected echo, a renaissance.

The date, the absolute abstract manifestation of the present, the extreme conceptualization of the everyday world, is made by On Kawara on his own. It is interjected by the artist, as the greatest experience of existence, of being alive, "still" and forever, and this appropriation of the date becomes a slow process, a ritual of gestation. Such form of complex gesturing encompasses spreading levels of colour, being careful to avoid imperfections and smudges, an endless conflict with error, a precise cutting-out of newspaper articles, an Atlantic arrangement of materials, and a definition of the cardboard box, which like a painting, may contain anything and everything. The gesture of self-portraiture races time, and does not always succeed in coming to a conclusion before midnight. It keeps trying "still" and forever, and only when it reaches its completion it becomes Today: a date painting, as souvenir-image of that day.

In this direction we engaged Kawara in a dialog with a well-known example. We think of that particular type of self-portrayal stylization that comes under the name of time lapse self portrait (temporal compression of an infinite series of self-portraits realized with regular frequency across a long lapse of lifetime, and collapsed in few minutes in order to produce the change visually), and whose principal masters are to be found in the projects of Jonathan Keller, Ahree Lee and Noah Kalina.[5]

We propose a parallel between On Kawara and Roman Opalka,[6] to a whole series of more or less recognized artists, who from the beginning of the 21st century have attempted digital self-portraiture with various time-lapse experiments. Our proposal, starting from a specific attention to forms of "self-archiving," wants to challenge what in the present state of research has proved to be authentic *quidditas* of contemporary neo-medial self-portraiture. We want to stress how the closer look of our proposal provides an outline for clear "imaginity" relevant to the new technologies of the Self. This outline seems to be formed (and not simply qualified) by four repeated, decisive features, beyond the gestural nature of the phenomenon: the date, the number, the series and the souvenir. Let us consider them one by one, taking them from our inhomogeneous repertoire of examples.

The Date

Kawara paints dates. He does so in the conviction that "language is the ultimate abstraction and through language all reality can be represented, even what is intangible and without form, like a date."[7] The date cannot be seen, much less touched, but is materialized through the gesture. Kawara's self-portrait, being faceless and bodiless, takes concrete form, by objectifying the highest degree of the formless, the impersonal, which is the date. The body is not portrayed, but the act of painting the date (date painting) becomes the demonstration of existence, to quote Kawara: "I am (still and forever)," but also "who I am" today, offering an assemblage of colour, of format, of news cutting, and of caption, in a perfect synoptic atlas which inscribes the subject today, a plethora of fragments (Beaujour).[8] Moreover, the phenomenology of time lapse imposes the date as a guarantee of the self-portraying gesture. Kalina's project *Everyday*, a six-minute video, which compresses five years of daily self-snapshots (2356 shots in just under six minutes from 11 January 2000 to 31 July 2006), establishes his self-portraying nature, because the dates, day by day, become the very logic of the gesture. As such, what happens in terms of archiving? The need for the date as the sole justification of the self-portraiture (it is the image of that exact day only because the date is there and the observer believes it), in a vortex of elements that are continually changing (hair, clothes, setting), becomes the artificial temporality of becoming, precisely because of the prevalence of the gestural dimension (exercise), the congealed instant of the day. Archiving oneself, putting oneself away, still and forever alive, means very simply the act of marking one's own image with a date (but only apparently, as with old photographs: the date printed on the back, becomes the only mark to identify time, the age, and context of the subject represented). At a closer look, however, that date completely loses its vocation as chronological reference point, and becomes a simple visual logic, a manner, a subterfuge, for putting oneself away on the Internet, as portioned in the freezer. The date becomes an integral part of the feasibility of the project of self-archiving by images, but loses its correspondence with the date on the calendar, and becomes a compositional strategy for the disembodied double. The date is no longer the first annotation on the diary page, the head of a letter, or stamped on a document, but these are all autobiographical dates. Here "the self-portrait as the secret project of every autobiography" extracts the dates ("ejaculations of time," says Kawara), and turns them into instants, a mechanism of time congealed in impersonal lives.

The Number

Every date painting is a number, since the date is also a number, a progressive one, and because every work is counted. As we mentioned earlier, Kawara notes on his diary the process of elaboration of the date painting, but in addition, he produces a parallel work, based exactly on the logic of counting: *One Hundred Years Calendar* (18.864 days), a panel of 70x129,5 cm, where a calendar of hundred years is depicted, and the single days are marked with different colours. The days where the artist is simply alive are marked in yellow, red is the color for the days in which he created a date painting, and green is for the days in which he realized more than one work. According to this meticulous registry, On Kawara has realized about two thousands date painting, and this is where the date is transformed into number, into quantity. In the wide range of time-lapse portraits, we can find a rather consistent stream of temporal compressions of the transformations of body features, metamorphosis. Losses of weight go hand in hand with registrations of increase in circumferences of pregnant bellies.

We selected a prize-winning example: the slimming process of James Barany (his nickname is jamusbaranus) in the 2004 work called *My Most Important Self-Portrait*.[9] In his words:

> *In August of 2004 I began* My Most Important Self-Portrait, *while following a strict pattern of diet, exercise and hypnosis; I began what I hope translates into a life-altering affair. Each day I measure my body mass and record my progress into an animated form. Several times throughout the week I document these slight changes by shooting time-lapse photography of my body. To express my emotional status I have constructed a small set that allows me the ability to rapidly manipulate text and image as I interact with them. Hundreds upon hundreds of images are manipulated to produce a sense of motion and believability as time-lapse and animated elements mix together.*[10]

Once again, we can see the gesture of showing process, and here it is clearly a process of numbers: starting from the 372 pounds that have to be progressively lost, the blackboard is filled with words, and above all numbers, in a count, even countdown that keeps discovering digits. This emphasis on the number, however, is not just enumeration, it is not only quantification of weight to be lost, but it constitutes in itself the quality of the images. In order to understand it, we should ask ourselves: what implication does this have with the meaning of archiving the self, of laying oneself away?

The recent self-portrayal time-lapse tradition indicates that the quantity corresponds precisely to the existence of what we see, and therefore of what is archived. You put yourself away according to a proportional strategy related to time: time of the self-portrait (time-video) against the time spent (time-life). The forty-one days of diet that brought Barany to lose twenty-two pounds, from 376 to 354 pounds, are archived in seven minutes. It is precisely this new property (or these new properties) of time, purely mathematical, made of numbers and proportional relations, that determines once more a self-portrayal exercise, aiming at laying yourself away, at leaving, abandoning, and rejecting the impersonal otherness of the self. Lives determined by numbers, where length does not correspond anymore to development, to a linear and natural progression of time (autobiography), but rather, is the result of a mechanic proportion of digits. Necessity and urgency are transformed into the reaching of a result, to be obtained numerically, in order to lay the self away in the web, like a human heritage.

The Series

Among Kawara's works, there is one in particular that dwells upon the concept of the series: "*I*" projects, divided into *I Read*, *I Got up*, *I Met*, *I Went* and *I Am still Alive*. Starting in October 1966 the artist sent postcards every day to friends and acquaintances noting what he was reading (newspaper cuttings glued on with the text that had attracted his attention underlined in red); then what time he had got up (number: hour and minutes); then who he had met (only first name), where he had gone (place name), and finally, since the beginning of December 1969, he sent daily telegrams to acquaintances and friends, simply announcing that on that day he was still alive.

In this last project, the autobiographical course is sterilized, made incapable of saying anything about daily happenings, in a progressive impoverishment (which for Kawara is conceptualization). The fact of being there is compressed into the very tautological (yet urgent, since it comes by telegram) news that he is still alive, and that basically he is still not dead. It is in "still" that the meaning of the series is enclosed, and it is "still," which causes the collapse of the autobiography in self-portrait. Here too, as in the logic of the time-lapse portrait, the series is constituted as a sum of analogies: similarities and dissimilarities, images that are almost the same and not entirely different.

These images alternate, and in their dissimilarity, in their "find the difference," they come to compose the series, to all intents they come to define (or de-finish) it, opening and closing it, limiting it in its quality as a block (a Bellourian symbolic block). It seems that once we come to the end of the possible variations, or in any case, once we have established that the variations are of no great importance for a hypothetical process of saturation, the series is exhausted. At least, this is how it seems. However, how can a series like *I Am still Alive* be concluded? How can one ordain its exhaustion because of saturation? Still alive is the principle of continuity; the date is the principle of discontinuity, but discontinuity will never reach saturation point, whereas continuity, oddly enough, will do, finding its limit in death, and this is the point Kawara suggests.

The series – a block of analogies, a mixture of same and different, similar and dissimilar, continuous and discontinuous – is not concluded with the failure of the rich advance of variants, or rather of all the possibilities of difference and diversity, but with the interruption of the "same." The "same" for Kawara is Kawara, it is the "I" of "I am still alive," in other words: still being alive. Closing the series means carrying out the extreme gesture of making oneself die prematurely. Prematurely not in the sense of being young, but because everyone tries to die, to see himself die, before death seizes you. In this sense, archiving yourself, cutting yourself away in the manner of the time-lapse portraits, actually means trying to declare the end of yourself, and to experience one's own finitude. Using the series, but radically contravening its logic: it is no longer a series that finishes because the possibilities (of natural death) have been exhausted, but a series that finishes because it strikes at its own heart (voluntary death), at what is its unvarying nature, namely the existence of the subject being portrayed. This is the point, the subject portrays himself. He disappears, he stands aside. The series as a pistol shot… Not yet.

Here we would like to make a brief reference to another great contemporary artist, Martin John Callanan, who reasons about the ways one can archive yourself on the Internet, proposing the series as a way of carrying out the self-portraying gesture.[11] Among his projects, we will only mention *Location of I*. Intending to be the absolute citizen; Callanan announced his physical position on the Internet every minute for two years, from March 2007 to July 2009. A time-lapse offers the video of the *Location of I* project. Digital citizenship has many meanings, among them that of being always online, always contactable, and findable (I cannot hide, and I became vulnerable).

Callanan has to stop, finish the project, find an ending, hand it over, leave it, file it, in order for it to be exhibited, and be concluded in this way. Thus, he has recourse to the idea of the series as a perfect subterfuge to state a tenet. However, not because there are no locations any longer, not because Callanan has taken a vow to be sedentary, but because Callanan is no longer there. The Callanan who proclaimed himself to be "I," has been put away like a dead man, by way of a series.

The Souvenir

Date, number, series, these elements not only interest On Kawara, but also others. Indeed, there are many artists that have been involved in the exploratory phase of our research, and there are many answers that correspond organically to our journey articulated along thematic knots. This is the case, for example, of Roman Opalka, who similar to a countermelody, we want to approach the closing of our speech.

Opalka was a French artist of Polish origin, who in 1965 launched the project *OPALKA 1965/1-∞*. This work was conceived as a program, an artistic process consisting of painting progressive numeration of rational integer numbers, starting from 1 and growing infinite, over canvases always of the same dimensions (196x135 cm), with white paint. On the background, initially black, the artist adds on each new canvas a centimeter of white, with the result that as times goes by, you have the slight impression that the numbers, written by hand in the Western way (from the top left corner towards the right) are fading away. We can find in Roman Opalka everything we seek to find until now.

This is because the fourth knot was conceived in order to sum up and reconcile date, number and series, with the original hypothesis for which the self-portrayal tradition of the new media belongs to the impersonal domain. This seems to be suggested by Opalka's decision of forging himself in self-portraits every day, always in the same pose and with the same appearance, clothing, and always taking the photo in the same moment: right after having painted the number on the canvas. However, this image has to be "zero-emotional," the face of subtraction, the resetting of the soul, the place of absolute neutrality. Opalka abstracts himself by dehumanizing himself within the daily self-portrayal experience; he tries to raise to an anesthetic body, emptied from within, even from the most ferocious emotion, such as the one triggered by the news of his father's death. He does this in order to arrive, via a process fully made of immobility and repetition, to a state where he is represented as an impersonal body. This example brings us back to Nancy's words (*Le Regard du portrait*):

> *The portrait immortalizes not just a person but rather the death (immortal) in (one) person. It is exactly this that represents its essential difference from the mortuary mask, which represents the dead one, instead than death itself. The mask takes the imprint of the dead (the work that the world impressed in it), the portrayal puts instead death itself at work: death at work in full life, in full figure, in full gaze.*[12]

This was the state of things until a short time ago. On August 6th Roman Oplaka died in his holiday home in Chieti, he would have been 80 on the 27th of that month, and his work *1965/1-∞* thus came to an end. The series was completed by severing the link between Opalka and becoming. The struggle with the infinite, had always been known to come to an end with the death of Oplaka. His unexpected death came while he was at work to become the *organon* of finiteness of the work of a lifetime. Definitive emancipation from "rust," from that slow vanishing of backgrounds, from ceaseless looking out of ever more diaphanous faces, from the echoes of an ever more broken voice, from numbers that were increasingly difficult to decipher, souvenirs of a life, darkly dissolving with death. We shall add nothing more, for the moment. Only a note. Opalka had several times the opportunity to say that the real difference between him and the other conceptualists was that he was the only one who could participate in his own exhibitions. Thus, Opalka's death marks the end of the exhibition of his works. Madame Opalka is assessing this too, while in Venice at the Michela Rizzo Foundation where his last (now we may well say "last") exhibition was set up, the public was holding their breath, because the artist had not come to celebrate his eightieth birthday. But for us, here, that is enough.

The souvenir is dumb and watchful, it is put away in the form of bits and pieces dated numerically in series. However, it is put away above all as a souvenir, or rather as a deathly face that, growing more and more pale, fixes its insistent, dumb, silent, impersonal gaze from the afterlife. Images as souvenirs that neutralize the experience of the life-span, the progressive wearing-out, and the development of existence in the form of an object, in pure coalescence of times. They congeal spaces and times following precise proportions, attempting to put in vitro, as under the glass of the souvenir's water-balls, buildings and monuments which continue to be marked, corroded and crumbled by time. Thus, if we want to think of a memorial aspect of the self-portrait in new media, and in particular of that time-lapse in whose defense we have spoken, it might be precisely the case of thinking of the souvenir, of the little things in series, for the most part made of humble materials, that can be put on a shelf or put away in a drawer, archived, in fact, self-archived. The souvenir here is also the symbol of the self-portraying gesture, which constitutes the act of removal in any autobiography (for Blanchot:[13] the principle of resemblance to oneself is the point of greatest coincidence between presence and absence, that is death), as Opalka notes: "In a diary, everyone can read the movement of their own existence. The photographs of my face, in contrast, are the images of the life and death of all those who look at them. They are, to all intents and purposes, images of the impersonal."

Notes

[1] The exhibition *ATLAS, How to carry the world on one's back?* arranged by Georges Didi-Huberman, took place at the Sabatini building of the National Museum of Art Reina Sofia of Madrid, from November 26th to 28th of March 2011 (www.museoreinasofia.es). The exhibition, in short, inspired by the intellectual adventure of Aby Warburg (1866-1929), worked on the Atlas model as a device to reconfigure the sensible experience of the world and as a form of knowledge through editing. Among the exhibited works, a little space is devoted to On Kawara and his series *I Am still Alive*.

[2] Japanese painter, draughtsman and conceptual artist, active in the USA. After graduating from Kariya High School in 1951, he moved to Tokyo, exhibiting at the Yomiuri Independent Exhibitions. His sensibility for a cold materialism became apparent in his series of drawings *Bathroom*, of dismembered grotesque nude bodies (1953-54; Tokyo, N. Mus. Mod. A.). Kawara went to Mexico in 1959 and travelled through Europe. He settled in New York in 1965. His renowned series of *Date Paintings* (from 1965), made in various cities on his travels, juxtapose a detail from a local newspaper with a simple record of the date in typographical letters and numbers on monochrome canvases using acrylic. The paintings' principal meaning was that the artist and viewer shared the numbers that

signified a date they both had lived. In the series of telegrams in the 1970s, which sent the message "I am still alive" to his friends, he used the verification of his own existence as a statement in a medium whose abstraction regardless of the artist's hand, paradoxically gave his work a tense reality. His other work in book form, *One Million Years* (*Past*, 1970-71; and *Future*, 1980; both artist's col., see 1980 exh. cat., pp. 116-123, 124-129), consists of one million years typewritten year by year. Such works exploring concepts of time and space led Kawara to be regarded as a leading conceptual artist.

[3] This work is one stage in the research project of a study group working on subjective writings in the cinema and in the new media. The research team, coordinated by Federica Villa, is especially careful to develop a reflection on the relationship between different forms of subjective writings and the construction of a "domain of the impersonal," especially in relation to the new-medial phenomenology. In particular, we report the first publications about it: Lorenzo Donghi, "Deliver Us from Good. Snapshots from Abu Ghraib," in *AAM-TAC. Arts and Artifacts in Movie. Technology, Aesthetics, Communication*, no. 7, 2010, pp. 65-70. Federica Villa, "Autobiografiche. Scritture del tempo sullo sconcerto," in *AAM-TAC. Arts and Artifacts in Movie. Technology, Aesthetics, Communication*, no. 7, 2010, pp. 59-63. Giacomo Di Foggia, Federica Villa, *Flânerie cinefila su Facebook*, in Giovanni Fiorentino, Mario Pireddu (ed.), *Feisbum/Facebook. Comunicazione e interazione sociale on line*, Nutrimenti Editore, Roma 2011. Martina Panelli, "I processi di identificazione in rete, l'autoritratto collettivo," in *DigiMag*, no. 65, June 2011 (avaible su http://www.digicult.it/digimag/).

[4] We refer here in particular to Franco Rella, *Negli occhi di Vincent. L'io nello specchio del mondo*, Feltrinelli, Milano 1998, and Alberto Boatto, *Narciso infranto. L'autoritratto moderno da Goya a Warhol*, Laterza, Roma 2005, and Omar Calabrese, *L'Art de l'autoportrait* (*L'arte dell'autoritratto. Storia e teoria di un genere pittorico*, il Volo, Milano 2010), Citadelles&Mazenod, Paris 2006.

[5] To view the work of Noah Kalina: http://everyday.noahkalina.com. In particular with respect to the time-lapse self-portraiture see Federica Villa, "Time-Lapse Self Portrait. L'autoritratto e la cosa metamorfica," in *Fata Morgana, Autoritratto*, no. 14, 2011, in press. And, more generally, David Lavery, "No More Undiscovered Countries: The Early Promise and Disappointing Career of Time-Lapse Photography," in *Film Studies*, no. 9, 2006, pp. 1-8. To view the work of Jonathan Keller Keller http://www.jk-keller.com, last access April 2011. To view the work of Lee Arhee http://www, ahreelee.com, last access April 2011.

[6] Continually in tension between formal reduction and existential theorisesis, the work of Roman Opalka can be included among what Richard Wollheim, in 1965, defined *Minimal art*. It's in fact undoubted that, in the monumental series of *Détails* that composes *OPALKA 1965/1-∞*, of which we will talk about later, there are present those principles that, in the sixties, marked a turning point in art history, going towards anti-expressivity, impersonality, the refusal of the subjectivism, the geometrism of forms and signs. In fact, the artist concentrates most of his existence in the realization of a "zero emotional" work that is expressed through the absence of every personal content. Instead, during the accumulation of every part of the series, the efforts of the artist seem to be projected, on the contrary, towards a constant and controverted affirmation of presence. "I anticipate the moment when I shall paint in white on a white canvas [...] to be at the same time alive and always in the presence of death." "Life has become the work and the work the life." These are some of the words that accompany the systematic calculation through which Roman Opalka engraves his will and prepares himself to leave life. Nevertheless, with the same attention, the artist also dedicates himself to the conception of every personal exhibition leaving indications on how to stage them, even after his

death. (It's in 1994, in Bonn, that Opalka attempts his first preparation of an octagonal museal space, recalling symbolically, through the proportions, dimensions, height of the walls and disposition of lights, the linear progression of numbers which he had reached throughout his life). In this way, if on the one hand, Opalka seems to desire the approaching of his death, on the other hand, through the calculation of what will be of him *post mortem*, he demonstrates the lucid desire of surviving, through a continually reversible process between anticipation and remembering. See in particular Lóránd Hegyi (ed.), *Roman Opalka Octogone*, Métropole, Saint-Etienne 2006, and Francesco Bonami, *Sogni e Conflitti, La dittatura dello spettatore*, Marsilio, Venezia 2003, p. 172.

[7] Kawara quoted in Dan Cameron, "On Kawara story," in *Arts Magazine*, 61, 2, 1986, p. 37.

[8] Michel Beaujour, *Miroirs d'encre*, Seuil, Paris 1980, p. 8.

[9] To view the work of James Barany: http://www.jamesbarany.com. A devoted father and lifelong resident of Wisconsin, Barany resides in Waukesha with his wife and three children. Barany's creative passions balance uniquely between two distinct art forms. By day he is an Associate Professor and Chair of 2D & 4D studies at the Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design, by night he performs with the Florentine Opera Company in Milwaukee, WI. These distinctly separate fields of the arts often stumble into one another and become unified through Barany's studio work. James is a recipient of the Mary Nohl Fellowship and has screened and exhibited his work nationally and internationally since 1992. Most recently, Barany has won numerous awards for his experimental animations and videos. He is an active member of the American Guild of Musical Artists and Foundations Art Theory and Education.

[10] Barany says: "*My Most Important Self-Portrait* is a combination of both high and low technology using my favorite stopmotion software from Boinx, a low-grade mini-dv camera with a very long firewire, and lots of screevers chalk," in http://www.transom.org/?=3557, last access April 2011.

[11] Martin John Callanan, apart from *Location of I*, which has already been quoted, faced the artistic scenario of the 21st century with works that continually stress and discuss the concept of identity in front of the new technologies. In *I Wanted to See the Whole of London*, the artist re-proposes through an audio display the registration in real time of the route he took through every tube station in London, arranging it with a video track that changes color station by station, hour by hour. As in *Location of I* in this work the gesture of mapping, of building digital geographies that are continually adjourn-able, seems to respond on the one hand to the necessity of *being there* (at the same time everywhere and nowhere) and of *possessing* the Self in the city (in the metropolis). On the other hand, the same gesture seems to respond to the necessity of *disappearing*, reducing the Self to a lost dot in the city, which has to be tracked down and pursued through the construction of another map. The presence of the artist, like in other works of artists we have examined here, passes through a form of absence. In this sense we also want to remember a curious adaptation in "modern" key of On Kawara's work *I Am still Alive*, through which Callanan dematerialized himself in a text – "I am still alive" – sent casually to various mobile phones in different geographic areas. See the site http://greyisgood.eu.

[12] Jean-Luc Nancy, *Le Regard du portrait* (*Il ritratto e il suo sguardo*, Raffaello Cortina, Milano 2002, p. 42) Galilée, Paris 2000. The passage we quoted refers to the portrait's (or self-portrait's) ability to function as a "Recall" (the French term "Rappel" is in fact the title of the chapter we take in exam). As the French philosopher says: "the portrait calls back [*rappelle*] the presence by considering the two meanings of the word *rappel*: it makes the presence come back from the absence, and it remembers it in the absence." Paraphrasing Nancy we could affirm that the self-portrait, even if it functions like a

"trace," like a sign (useful to the subject for returning present to itself), it ends up producing the image of an absence that could be "a distancing effect or death." To remember the Self means for us to imagine one's self as someone who's not with us anymore, and at the same time, to bring this someone back to life through an image that doesn't resemble it. It's from this suggestion that we evoke the sense of the self-portrait as a *souvenir*, because we understand it as a gesture which, between the approach and distancing from the Self, between the desire of surviving and death, can "immortalize" the subject through the image of the Self as an Other.

[13] We refer here to Maurice Blanchot, *Les Deux Versions de l'imaginaire*, in *L'Espace Littéraire* (*Lo spazio letterario*, Einaudi, Torino 1967) Gallimard, Paris 1955, a text where Blanchot discusses the concept of "resemblance" as it has been faced by Sartre and Lévinas (and which will be re-employed by Nancy). From this passage, that expresses the concept of a "resemblance without reference," we highlight the example of the *cadaveric body (corpse)* as it was assumed by Blanchot to confirm his thesis. According to Blanchot, the moment of death traces an empty space, where the image of the lost person is kept hanging between the image of a person that was alive and the image of a person that is not yet *there*. The face of the dead person is fixed through an image where the person begins to resemble *itself*: "Shouldn't we say: the one he was when he was alive? To resemble *itself* is yet the right way to say it. The Self designates the impersonal Being. […]. The dead body is his own image." In others words, to die, to become an image, to write, traces for Blanchot the same path, where "I" looses it's identity and begins to *look alike*: not to the "I" that it was, but to something that it found only when the dead body evoked an Other, a double, which nevertheless impresses on that "I" the most original form that it has to being alike itself. The resemblance is therefore a principle of recognition that doesn't refer to a starting model, but to something else, that actually creates the new image.

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The "Encyclopaedic Subject." Recording Recollections in Godard's Self-Portrait

It has often been referred to as a highly self-reflective component that characterises the films of Jean-Luc Godard in recent decades, which is most explicit in the colossal project of *Histoire(s) du cinéma*, made between 1988 and 1998: an archive of the present, made of images of the history of cinema, and a definition of a cinematographic subject composed of a filmic memory. Cinematic, literary and pictorial images move across the screen, in a continuous stream, interrupted by the rhythm of keys on a typewriter or by the intermittent pauses of black shots. The images of memorial archives are put into action, building a subjective identity which arises together and through cinema: "film writing supported by self-writing and vice versa (my translation)."[1] The construction of film history through images seems inevitably intertwined with research of the mysterious area of subjectivity. Godard himself affirms: "without cinema I would never have been able to have a history. This allowed me to think about my own story and put it into a larger one, which was at one and at the same time outside and inside of me (my translation)."[2] *Montage* moves past images in an indissoluble connection between memory and identity and in a dynamic switch between individual expression and historical memory. This strong connection between memory and subjectivity emerges with specific relevance in a movie that Godard made in 1994, during the creation of *Histoire(s)*: a 50 minute medium-length film called *JLG/JLG. Self-portrait in December*. The film is situated among the sequential episodes of *Histoire(s)*: *2A. Seul le cinéma*, *2B. Fatale beauté* (1994) and *3A. La Monnaie de l'absolu*, *3B. Une vague nouvelle* (1995), and presents a complexity and a particular focus along with a great deal of experimentation, that in many ways suggests similarities with the structure of *Histoire(s)*. Starting with the title, the film places the issue as one which is far from being overcome, of the configuration of subjectivity in cinema, which is obviously different from the experimental proposal by other arts, but inevitably comparable. As the voiceover within the film confirms, the film is not intended as an "autobiography" of its subject, Jean-Luc Godard, but as a "self-portrait." Godard chooses to label his work under the classification of self-portrait, discarding the traditional formula of autobiography, as well as that of confession. The intention is not to provide facts and details, tracing a progression of events that together tell the story of a life. But a different way of documenting a person's reality: through the way he looks, through impressions, images, emotions and landscapes that surround him.

Godard's film seems to be an authentic "pedagogy" of self-portraying, as it has been defined by the theory of recent decades, through an interesting discussion put forward by the conditions that define it. Adopting a notion from Michel Beaujour,[3] Raymond Bellour chose for cinematic representations of the intimate the expression "self-portrait," instead of the traditional notion of autobiography, to introduce and underline some essential distinctions.[4]

The main difference between the concepts of autobiography and self-portrait refers to the narrative and the use of temporality. Autobiography, in fact, is necessarily connected with a story that one is obliged to follow. In self-portrait, instead, we have the absence of a chronological story and, as Bellour himself writes, "the narration is subordinated to a collage of elements ordered according to a series of thematic types." This would be well explained by the following statement, imaginary announcement of the self-portraitist himself: "I'm not going to tell you what I've done, but I'm going to tell you who I am."[5] Not a chronological and temporal obligation, which should be strictly related to a narrative structure, but a free way to connect together different images of the self. There is of course coherence in self-portrait, but it lies in a system of remembrances and anachronistic resemblances. This practice is related to the logic of correspondences and *montage*, in which dialogue and action are replaced by monologue and digressions.

Initially, Godard's self-portrait seems completely unordered, since one sequence follows another with brutal cuts of images and sounds. An intimate feeling is immediately evoked by the decision to offer the camera the internal quiet nature of Godard's own home in Rolle, which is populated by rare ghostly apparitions of the figure of Godard himself. In 1979 the filmmaker left Grenoble to move to Rolle, a small town near Lake Geneva, which has been the location of several films since the eighties. This isolated homeland of the filmmaker becomes a symbolic place for a new generation of artistic productions:

> *It's the second time I have had the feeling that my life was ahead of me, my second life in the movies, or rather the third. The first was before I became a filmmaker, I was just hanging around, I was trying. The second was from the point at which I made Breathless in 1968 until 1970, and then there was the retirement, I do not know how one should define it, and the third is now.*[6]

The camera explores the emptiness of Godard's apartment, suggesting the director in his absence, and the chapters of the movie emerge on the blank pages of a school notebook.

As in *Histoire(s)*, the narrative structure is replaced by recollections and memoirs that, through change, resurface. The screenplay, or better the phrases pronounced in the film, consists almost entirely of quotes and the process of reconstructing personality is expressed through the practices of discontinuity, anachronism and assembly. These elements are capable of reactivate recollections, giving them a consistency and a connection. "If *JLG by JLG* exists, what does this '*by JLG*' mean? It will concern childhood landscape / and of the past / with no one in them / and also more recent landscapes / where things were filmed," as the voiceover declares. Images of the woods, of Lake Geneva and of the countryside are edited with an audio that mixes telephone rings, sounds of birds, movie soundtracks in different languages, music, and a massive system of literary and philosophical quotations. Godard's images, quotations, reproductions of famous paintings, postcards, names of loved authors and landscapes are inextricably connected. The rare images of Godard himself and the scenes shot at home are juxtaposed and assembled with pictures and books, in an audio-visual puzzle. Literary images enter the film through the characters, who read texts and fragments aloud. Painting images, instead, are quoted through reproduction of famous pictures or, occasionally, it is the film itself that "steals" from visual art, as when in the darkness of a room the light discovers a picture illuminated by a fire, referring to visual experiments of the seventeenth century. Godard presents himself through the characteristic of invisibility, continuously trying not to show his face or his body completely.

At the beginning, the filmmaker is presented as a blue shadow, superimposed over a photograph or mirrored on a window. The camera presents the elusive presence of the subject from the back, the profile, in the distance of a silhouette, in a close-up immersed in the dark.

In the obscurity of his bedroom the director looks into the camera, but we cannot catch his eyes. This is a way of cancelling the look, which is the authentic trace that qualifies subjectivity, and making a blind look into the camera. Our eyes are permanently consigned to the imaginary and self-portraying is inevitably a fight against invisibility; it is the form of blindness in its essence. The image of the subject is condemned to the darkness and all self-portraits are drawings of the blind, as Derrida argues.[7] Objects replace the invisible body of the author: pictures and words that preserve his essence. We hear echoes, whispers, conversations, voices over voices in different languages, and again the voice of Godard.

The research of identity passes through particular key points, such as the dualism between the "exception," which is art, and the "rule," which is instead part of culture. Representations of the "exception," as the words and images created by Flaubert, Pushkin, Dostoevskij, Cezanne, Vermeer, Rubens, Antonioni, contrast the appearance of "rule," such as computer, television, tourism, war). "There is culture which is the rule / which is part of the rule / there is the exception / which is art/which is part of art / everyone speaks the rule / cigarettes / computers / t-shirt / television / It is the nature of the rule to wish the death of the exception," the voiceover affirms.[8] Pronouncing the language of art becomes a way to escape from the rules. Godard pronounces the several names of the "exception," the different names of the arts giving cinema the power to be an act of resistance. It is a flux of words without an author, without the quotation marks, which come from the off-screen and from the hereafter. It suddenly reminds us the project of Walter Benjamin in the work of *Passagenwerk*: a whole book made entirely of quotes. The art of "quoting without quotation marks," as Benjamin affirms, is strictly connected with the art of *montage*. As in *Histoire(s) du cinéma*, *montage* creates a connection which is similar to the process of memory. Photographs and art materials are inserted into the body of the film to section it, making the filmmaker an intermittent subject. The aesthetics of fragmentation and the practice of *montage* involves images of dissimilar origin, which occur anonymously. Godard uses quotations whose origin and context meanings provoke a tension with their new cinematographic setting. As Jaques Aumont wrote about *Histoire(s)*: "It is not irreducible to a mere game of quotations, but it is rather a memory, in which the image can be open to new connections. It is a rare embodiment of Warburg's revolutionary concept of the archive."[9]

The subject is replaced by substitutes that represent it and *collective assemblages* take the place of individual enunciation:

> *The images and voices intersect and overlap each other continuously, searching for a procedure in which the enunciation instance becomes multiplied and is produced by collective assemblages: "there is no subject, only collective assemblages of enunciation." […] The social character of enunciation is intrinsically founded only if one succeeds in demonstrating how enunciation in itself implies collective assemblage.*[10]

The reoccurrence and repetition must be conceived as a return of something that is both similar and different from what preceded it, not a repetition of the identical but a new occurrence which combines replication and originality:

> *We propose to think difference in itself independently of the forms of representation which reduce it to the Same and the relation of different to different independently of those forms which make them pass through the negative. […] A concept of difference without negation, precisely because unless it is subordinated to the identical, difference would not extend or*

> *"would not have to extend" as far as opposition and contradiction. [...] Repetition is not content with multiplying instances of the same concept; it puts the concept outside itself and causes it to exist in so many instances* hic et nunc. *It fragments identity itself.*[11]

Moments of memory escape classification, and the past and the present are mixed, suggesting the operation of the interior. The present is represented by the concrete objects showed by the camera, and the past is just evoked in the invisibility of remembrances and infancy. The allusion to childhood is intermittent, appearing throughout the images of native landscapes or in the intense texture of a photograph. A photographic portrait of Godard's childhood is the opening image of the film, trying to go back to the infancy and looking for a correspondence between the current image of the subject and the opaque trace of a "pre-history" of his body. The camera shows a photograph of a child, in black and white, put on a fireplace. It is an old photo and it has been enlarged, as we can see from the grain. The light that enters from the window lets us catch a shadow over the photograph. It is the shadow of Godard himself, filming with a little camera. This is the first of the numerous imaginary shots of Godard in the film. The filmmaker is presented as a shadow, as a ghost, whispering with a soft voice, which seems to come from the land of dead. The filmmaker's voiceover explains the need to recognize himself in his own image as a child. The use of photography, as well as the use of voice-over, seemed to Philippe Lejeune to be two important conditions to achieve an intimacy of cinematic image, considered impossible for other theorists. It is in this unique static image that all of the other presences converge. Moreover, in the image of childhood covered by the shadow of the aged man, the present intersects the past in a unique image of time. The image of youth, as well as reproductions of famous paintings preserved in the artist's home, the soundtracks of films loved and the citations assume in *JLG/JLG* the role of figures of thought and otherness. The image of childhood causes a reactivation of memory, and an opening towards the past. The enigma of finding an organic relationship, rather than a morphological one (Barthes), with the infancy of the subject is expressed in the presence of the disquieting photographic trace, whose icy immobility is a figure of mourning and death:

> *It usually work that way/death arrives and then you go into mourning/I do not know exactly why, but I did the opposite/I was in mourning before, but death did not come through the streets of Paris nor by the river of the Lake Geneva.*[12]

The past comes again in the materiality of the snapshot, evoking an ambiguous mourning figure that needs to be explained. The same image is used in *Histoire(s)*, in a section of *Chapter 3A. La Monnaie de l'absolu*, after visual fragments related to the World War II and the Holocaust. The characters of the title *le passé n'est jamais mort* appear on the photograph of the young boy on which the number 1944 is impressed. The date of the liberation of France is marked on the boy's face, mixing personal and historical memory. The legacy of the war, then, represents a historical grief that overshadows the image of youth. The shadow of time appears in the picture, the dynamic between past and present coexist in a dialectical relationship (Benjamin). Through reassembling the images of the subject, past and present are connected together in a diachronic dimension. In *Histoire(s)*, the historic ruins were superimposed on the photographic image and in *JLG/JLG* it is the shadow of the author's adult body to obscure the face of youth, building a double absence that seems to evoke the mystery of time. The image of the past, which is distant but real, and an image of the present, that is nebulous and elusive:

> *Every now is the now of a determinate knowability. [...] It is not that what is past casts its light on the what is present, or what is the present its light on what is past; rather, an image is that wherein what has been comes together in a flash*

> *with the now to form a constellation. In other words, image is dialectics at a standstill. For while the relation of the present to the past is purely temporal, the relation of what has been to the now is dialectical: not temporal in nature but imagistic. Only dialectical images are genuinely historical-that is, not archaic-images.*[13]

The cinematic image, resulting in the assembly, is closely linked to the dialectical image, which is a synthesis between past and present, in terms suggested by Walter Benjamin. The juxtaposition and repetition release the archival image from the immobility, putting it back in motion. The device that is used to reactivate this potential is editing, which uses new connections and gives the images a new chance to release their inner potential:

> *Now we can see the proximity between repetition and memory. Memory can not simply give us back the past as it was, as a fact inert (this would be hell). Memory gives past a chance to live again. This is the sense of the theological experience that Benjamin saw in memory, when he said that remembering completes the incomplete. Memory is, so to say, an apparatus of which can transform reality into possibility and possibility into reality. Just think for a second and realize that this is also the definition of cinema.*[14]

As a result of the contemporary increasing of tools and expressive substances, the representation of the self seems to find a productive formality in the aesthetics of fragmentation. Subjective practices accept the paradox of the autobiography, the impossibility to give a complete or exhaustive image of the self and film becomes a *collage* of elements of a private archive. Having recognised the difficulty of providing a unified image of the subject, the subjective experience, rather than searching for unity, can better find consistency in the consolidation of heterogeneous elements. Self-portraying seems to prefer discontinuity and fragmented forms, changes and multiplication of point of view. Its characteristics consist of an assembly of elements ordered according to a series of thematic types, as the principal proponent of self-portrait Raymond Bellour asserts. Self-portrait is a particular aesthetic form, at work in the contemporary age, that reflects the multiplicity of the subject. The subject of self-portrait has thus become "encyclopaedic,"

> *grasping its identity through the optic of the world, and in particular of culture – of everything, in other words, that constitutes the individual. [...] Starting from the most personal quest possible, the author opens the self up to the impersonal, moving constantly from the particular to the general.*[15]

Notes

[1] Marie-Françoise Grange, *L'Autoportrait en cinéma*, Presses Universitaires de Rennes II, Rennes 2008, p. 54.

[2] "Jean-Luc Godard, Bologna 1998" (interview transcription), in Rinaldo Censi (ed.), *Histoire(s) du cinéma. Jean-Luc Godard*, Edizioni Cineteca di Bologna, Bologna 2010.

[3] Michel Beaujour, *Miroirs d'encre. Rhéthorique de l'autoportrait*, Seuil, Paris 1980.

[4] Raymond Bellour, *L'Entre-Images. Photo. Cinéma. Vidéo*, La Différence, Paris 1990.

[5] Raymond Bellour, *Eye for I: Video Self-Portraits*, Bale State University, Indipendent Curator Inc., New York 1990.

[6] Catherine David, "Travail-amour-cinéma," in *Le Nouvel Observateur*, no. 20, October 1980.

[7] Jacques Derrida, *Memoirs of the Blind. The Self-portrait and Other Ruins* (*Mémoires d'aveugle,*

L'Autoportrait et autres ruines, Édition de la réunion des musées nationaux, Paris 1990), The University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1993.

[8] For a reflection on this opposition see J.S. Williams, "European Culture and Artistic Resistance in *Histoire(s) du cinéma Chapter 3A. La Monnaie de l'absolu*," in M. Temple, J.E. Williams, *The Cinema Alone. Essays on the Work of Jean-Luc Godard 1985-2000*, Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam 2000.

[9] Jacques Aumont, *La mano che cancella*, in Rinaldo Censi (ed.), *Histoire(s) du cinéma. Jean-Luc Godard*, cit., p. 26.

[10] Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (*Mille plateaux. Capitalisme et schizophrénie*, Éditions de Minuit, Paris 1980), Continuum, London 2004, p. 294.

[11] Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition* (*Différence et répétition*, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris 1968), Continuum, London 2004, p. 340.

[12] Jean-Luc Godard, *JLG/JLG. Autoritratto a dicembre* (*JLG/JLG*, Editions P.O.L., Paris 1996), Il Castoro, Milano 1997.

[13] Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project* (*Passagen-Werk* in *Gesammelte Schriften*, 7 vols 1972), Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge 1999, pp. 462-463.

[14] Giorgio Agamben, *Il cinema di Guy Debord*, in E. Ghezzi, R. Turigliatto (ed.), *Guy Debord (contro) il cinema*, Il Castoro, Milano 2001, p. 105.

[15] Raymond Bellour, *Eye for I: Video Self-Portraits*, cit.

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The Best Job in the World and Lacan

The acclaimed British writer and theorists Antonia Susan Byatt in her recent interview at *The Guardian* newspaper has talked about the sense of confusion that the contemporary world we live in finds itself in: with no God and no religion. The new media, social networks and You Tube provide a curious chance to validate one's existence – in the absence of the believable Big Other. This is what she says:

> *The word* Facebook *means it's a mirror. You're actually looking for a mirror. And you need a mirror because you haven't got a picture (of who you are). You need a mirror to tell you who you are... You only exist if you tell people you are there.*[1]

One could begin to see that the new media, with Youtube and Facebook, create an endless resource of the archive of the contemporary world. This paper looks at both Lacanian *Mirror Stage* and the global campaign of *The Best Job in the World* (2009) as an example of that phenomenon.

The Best Job in the World advertised a dream job of a paradise island's caretaker. The duties involved 12 hours of pleasant non-work a week, like fish feeding and pool cleaning. The lucky candidate was set to earn 150.000 Australian dollars in six months. Between January and May 2009 so many millions visited the site that it had to be continuously re-designed to cope with ever growing traffic. The job was advertised modestly first in classified ads' pages and it seemed extraordinary but real. The story of the "dream job" (as it was called in some territories) was picked up by broadcasters and newspapers all over the world: somehow everybody wanted to believe that these impossible opportunities did exist in our often mundane lives after all. The applicants had to be a little more than just "dreamers" too: in some way they did appear as "agents," capable of actually doing *something* in order to influence the shape of their lives. The application process involved creating a 1-minute video in which the applicant was to explain – and show – why they would be perfect for the job. 35.000 people globally applied. BBC Television made then the only documentary film (as opposed to a news item) which focused on the campaign and, in particular, followed the four British semi finalists, two women and two men aged between 19 and 34, towards their goal to make the campaign's glamorous final to be held on one of the islands of the Great Barrier Reef. I was the director of that movie.

Even with no theoretical framework at all, one could see that something interesting was going on during that process – which was only revealed as a "marketing campaign" by Tourism Queensland, an Australian Governmental organization, at the semi finals stage, possibly for legal reasons (as not to be accused of misleading the applicants). The creative brain behind the campaign was an advertising agency Cummins Nitro, based in Brisbane. In order to "sell" themselves, the candidates had to create the perfect reflection of themselves. Their application videos therefore show them as beautiful, young, energetic and clever – clearly an idealized version of themselves. Ben Southhall, the eventual winner of the whole campaign, called himself "adventurous, crazy, energetic" and "practically a fish" referring to his supreme swimming abilities. Others claimed boldly that they were "the ones you searched the world to find." They were all intrepid travelers versed in the ways of the world, "adaptable," "excellent with people," "athletic," "having all the skills needed and more," "highly creative" and generally so much better that the rest of the "competition had no chance." Some of the women did take their clothes off, but they did not do well for the squeaky clean campaign and a Canadian boy staged a 1-minute musical with himself in the leading role in order to secure a position in the semi-final.

At the semi-final stage 50 lucky candidates were chosen from around the world to compete for their place in the final. The lucky semi-finalists all used the same language: "I feel I am in this dream and I don't want it to end," "a dream come true," "my life will be sorted," "I feel like I have won the Golden ticket" (referring to the Charlie and the Chocolate Factory's Golden tickets which invited a few lucky ones to enter the magical world of Willy Wonka's factory). But almost as quickly as the joy of the prize occurred, another emotion crept in: anxiety! That was not a chocolate factory they would be entering (although of course that place was pretty horrifying too) but the external world in which the inevitable clash between their dream and harsh reality of the world, will lead to difficulties.

That clash, I would argue, is almost a textbook clash between the Imaginary and the Symbolic as described by Jacques Lacan. I shall return to that point directly. The candidates are all of a sudden "petrified" because "the phone hasn't stopped ringing" and they will have to face the world, their perfect image tested immediately against the Other. They are also told that they now have a PR agent, a fact that, instead of them feeling happy (given that the competition involved a creation of one's own marketing campaign) contributed to the sense of being suddenly on display.

I argue that the process of application can be theorized using some key Lacanian ideas, notably the *Mirror Stage*, and the treatment of the image and the gaze in Lacan's *Seminar XI*. On a more fundamental level, the whole campaign offers a perfect demonstration of Lacanian "suture," a meeting, usually a difficult one, between Lacanian notions of the Imaginary and the Symbolic.

Lacan himself defines the *Mirror Stage* in the following way:

> *We have only to understand the mirror stage as an identification, in the full sense that analysis gives to the term: namely, the transformation that takes place in the subject when he assumes an image – whose predestination to this phase effect is sufficiently indicated by the use, in analytic theory, of the ancient term imago. This jubilant assumption of his spectacular image by the child at the infant's stage, still sunk in his motor incapacity and nursling dependence, would seem to exhibit in an exemplary situation the symbolic matrix in which he I is precipitated in a primordial form, before it is objectified in the dialectic of identification with the other, and before language restores to it, in the universal, its function as subject.*[2]

For Lacan the ego emerges from this moment of alienation and fascination with one's own image, which covers the fragmentary nature of the "*I*." The Imaginary relationship of the emerging subject to the image in the mirror stays with us throughout our lives: we long for that jubilant assumption of one's reflection to be repeated offering a reassurance that we are whole despite the fact that our *subjecthoods* are forever doomed to fragmentary existence.

So one could also argue that the *Mirror Stage* marks also the beginning of *Desire*, the chase after the forever vanishing Lacanian "*le petit object* a," which creates endless anxiety for the subject but can also form the basis for our creative existence in the world. In chasing the lack, we might be able to sublimate that desire into a constructive existence in the external world.

Lacan's *Seminar XI* was delivered in 1964, amongst the high drama of Lacan's departure from the International Psychoanalytical Association. It was published for the first time in French in 1973, and almost quarter of a century after the presentation of the *Mirror Stage* paper. In *Seminar XI* at the outset Lacan says that some of his ideas have changed and then he attempts to clarify notions regarding the "gaze." He says very clearly two things. First that,

> *the relationship between the gaze and what one wishes to see involves a lure. The subject is presented as other than he is, and what one shows him is not what one wishes him to see. It is in this way that the eye may function as objet a that is to say at the level of the lack.*[3]

But secondly, explaining his ideas of the *Mirror Stage* again in a paper called "what is a picture?," he states:

> *I must, to begin with, insist on the following: in the scopic field the gaze is outside, I am looked at, this is to say, I am a picture. This is the function that is found at the heart of the institution of the subject in the visible. What determines me, at the most profound level, in the visible, is the gaze that is outside. It is through the gaze that I enter light and it is from the gaze that I receive its effects Hence it comes about that the gaze is the instrument through which […]* I am photographed.[4] (my emphasis, Lacan's italics)

One could argue that *Seminar XI* describes perfectly the process leading to the subject of any documentary acquiescing in participating in a film, and thereby working through their unconscious desire to be constituted in the visible as the subject.

One could argue that initial advert exploited the candidates' unconscious desire to re-run the innocence of the *Mirror Stage* in which a perfect image can be accepted as the representation of one's *subjecthood*, and their desire to be validated through the gaze of the other. Spectators around the world were also perhaps seduced by the same impossible dream of re-entering their Imaginary through the dream of *The Best Job in the World*.

In addition, the ground rules were not really established at the beginning of the campaign, in stark contrast to the well established talent competitions such as *X Factor*, *Britain Has Talent* or even *The Apprentice*, which are driven by a ruthless and openly stated voyeuristic need to find the candidates ready to undergo an almost sadistic sequence of events. In *The Best Job in the World* the candidates were encouraged to create a concrete symbolization of the perfect self. In the first instance, the attraction was purely to create the all singing and dancing persona both creative and physical who would deserve a re-entry into the Imaginary. But what was really required remained a mystery forever. The BBC documentary became another "mirror" for the participants – and another "gaze." The realization that the job application process was in fact a marketing campaign in which the applicants were subjected to the brutal laws of the Big Other (the Symbolic) became a source of a trauma to the participants – and to me as the holder of the "gaze" too: the candidates' Imaginary perfection in shatters as well as the innocence of my gaze. The realization that far from being "the light" through which the other could constitute their *subjecthood* I was just the instrument of the patriarchal Symbolic system was traumatic, for me too. A full discussion of a realization on the part of the filmmaker that she, after all, was but a phallus of the Symbolic, is outside the scope of this paper but I will come back to that point towards the end.

The first thing that happened in the process was the realization that the candidates' "specular image" and indeed they as subjects, will be compared to the others. One could argue that some of the mechanisms described in Lacan's *Seminar XI* are in place here again: the gaze of the other and their own gaze as the other. They look at each other and are looked at, their Imaginary fragile wholeness no more dismantled by the hostile gaze, Lacanian evil eye. At the outset the semi finalists wanted to hold on to their inter-subjective relationality: they weren't really going to compete. That lasted literally one day.

Interestingly, whilst their overall aim was clearly the same: the get the job, the actual underlying desires were quite different: Holly, the writer, wanted more time to write her novel in order "to become more what I really want to be" but also did want the 70.000 pounds connected to the job as to get a deposit on a flat "which otherwise would never happen." Ben stated that he was doing it all for love and the money would pay for the wedding (which did not take place and the couple are not together any more). Sarah did dream to blog in a bikini on a beach. And Doug – the youngest and most practical, thought it would be a "cool" year out.

The cruelest move on the part of the organizers was uncertainty: the rules of the application process, such as they were, changed for not apparent reason (for example, it was the British candidate with least votes, Ben Southhall who went through to the final and won the job). I gave the participants of my film small digital cameras and encouraged them to record their own video diaries. These became a testimony to their growing unease and anxiety. Their perfect "specular image" began to disintegrate in a dangerous way in no time at all – the clash between the Symbolic and the Imaginary was such that if left not space for any compromises.

At the final in Australia, Ben vented his rage on camera. The candidates were not subjects any more, they were Lacanian autumatons: they were given identical T-shirts with no names of their own on them, just the name of the organisers. Ben says clearly in the film "we are still their little 'gofers', we are here to sell a product, we are still in their system."

The "archive" of the moment in time of 2009 offered through *The Best Job in the World* campaign does not offer an optimistic picture: the candidates naïve desire to create their autobiographical statements on the internet along with the unrealistic desire to realize their fantasy resulted in a complete sense of betrayal. Whilst asked what they felt about the process, the finalists expressed their disappointment with themselves and the media portrayal of them, so very different from the original submissions. One of the candidates says:

> *In all of my private films I was a mess – crying, uncertain, embarrassed, finding public attention difficult to manage or understand – and none of these made the cut: whether to protect me or to protect the film, I don't know. I don't care at all how I came out in the film – it is largely forgotten by the people I care about, now – but I care that what I said was edited and cut to make me sound like somebody else; to make me seem more confident than I was, more sure of myself, and far more certain of my own success, and far more sure about what the process was actually FOR. [...]*
>
> *I hold no ill feelings towards anyone in the process: of Best Job, of the documentary, of any other candidates. It was a good film, it was a successful publicity campaign, and thus nobody can be blamed for achieving as much as they managed to achieve. Everybody was doing their jobs, and those jobs were done: well, for the most part, and productively. If our lives changed, it was of our own doing: and the same if they did not. [...]*
>
> *But still watching the film made me feel empty and disappointed – in myself too. I never thought I could behave this way – enticed by something which was never there.*

In conclusion, the *Best Job in the World* campaign, and indeed the documentary, may have exploited the unconscious desire to both see one's image reflected in the mirror of the new media as described by Antonia Susan Byatt but also, more importantly, illustrated another application of Lacan's *Mirror Stage*.

Whilst it is easy to understand the young candidates desire to apply for the dream job, it is perhaps a little harder to completely sympathise with their eagerness to get engaged with various media activities, including the documentary. But on the other hand, it is not a new observations. The French filmmaker Jean Rouch said famously more than 40 years ago that the camera is like a "psychoanalytical stimulant," both "a mirror and a window:"

> *Some of the public who saw the film said the film was full of exhibitionists. I don't think so. It's not exactly exhibitionism: it's a very strange kind of confession in front of the camera, where the camera is, let's say, a mirror, and also a window open to the outside.*
>
> *[...] At that point there becomes a possibility of doing something I couldn't do if the camera wasn't there: it becomes a kind of psychoanalytical stimulant, which lets people do things they wouldn't otherwise do.*[5]

More recently filmmaker Kevn Macdonald in *Imagining Reality* (2006) made a similar observation:

> *It may be a truism to liken the interviewing process to that of psychoanalysis, but in my experience that is very much the case. People will say things to you in front of the camera and a film crew that they might not have said ever before – even to their family and friends. They often say things they hadn't ever properly formulated before – and will be surprised, and sometimes upset, how much 'they have betrayed themselves' when you show them the finished film.*[6]

It is clear that psychoanalysis, which has not been deployed much in documentary studies and which indeed is the subject of my PhD thesis, might still be able to offer some tools in interrogating the under-researched area of documentary film studies.

Notes

[1] Antonia Susan Byatt, Interview in *The Guardian*, August 27, 2010, http://summersault.co.uk/news/alone-in-a-godless-universe-still-there's-always-twitter.../, last visit April 2011.

[2] See Jacques Lacan, *Ecrits: A Selection* (*Ecrits*, Seuil, Paris 1966), Routledge, London 2008, p. 2, and also *Ecrits: The First Complete Edition in English*, Norton, New York 2008.

[3] Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* (*Le Séminaire, Livre XI : Les Quatre Concepts fondamentaux de la psychanalyse*, Seuil, Paris 1973), Penguin, Harmondsworth 2005 (this is in the chapter *The Line and the Light* and the section entitled *Of the Gaze as Object Petit* a.), p. 104.

[4] *Idem*, p. 106.

[5] See Mark Cousins, Kevin MacDonald (eds.), *Imagining Reality,* Faber and Faber, London 2006.

[6] *Idem*, p. 392.

Archival Practices: Preservation and Valorization

Sabine Lenk, Cinémathèque de la Ville de Luxembourg

Le Film, un « Artefact Archival » ?

> *En mettant au point la cinématographie, ses inventeurs entendaient pérenniser les apparences qu'ils étaient parvenus à fixer. Le film permettait de conserver éternellement le reflet des hommes et de leur cadre de vie. [...] Près d'un siècle de cinématographie nous a montré combien ce rêve était illusoire.*[1]
> Vincent Pinel, 1985

> *Die Archive spielen eine wesentliche Rolle für die gesellschaftliche Entwicklung, da sie das individuelle und das kollektive Gedächtnis sichern und unterstützen.*[2]
> Weltweite Allgemeine Erklärung über Archive

Dans mon annonce pour cette conférence j'ai posé la question : est-ce qu'il est vraiment possible pour les archives de (sauve-)garder la mémoire de l'histoire du cinéma ou est-ce une illusion qu'une sociétése crée ? La *Déclaration universelle sur les archives* signé le 17 Septembre 2010 à Oslo l'affirme. De mon point de vue d'archiviste-historienne je réponds que c'est une douce illusion. La position socio-politique des archives cinématographiques ainsi que leur pratique quotidienne ne permettent pas de garder le patrimoine cinématographique. Les cinémathèques nourrissent cet espoir illusoire dans le but d'éviter qu'encore plus de films disparaissent, mais elles savent, en principe, que leurs moyens sont trop pauvres pour le réaliser.

Le Pouvoir de l'archive – visible et caché

Dans la présentation du thème du colloque les organisateurs parlent de l'archive comme « [...] *instance which regulates, institutes and organizes the places and positions of access to the experience of the visual* ». Dans cette optique l'archive est une « institution très puissante » non seulement parce qu'il y a des « cerbères » tels que Henri Langlois ou Jacques Ledoux qui veillent à l'entrée et protègent leurs trésors férocement. Le pouvoir de l'archive dans le domaine de la conservation est moins connu.

Le conservateur en chef décide de la garde ou de la destruction du matériel. Il / elle détermine si un film apporté est accepté et gardé ou refusé ce qui signifie, par exemple pour les films d'un cinéaste amateur ou d'un collectionneur privé, en général l'anéantissement de son œuvre ou de sa collection.

Le conservateur décide également si un film sur support inflammable est conservé, restauré et de nouveau rendu public où laissé de côté, si une copie est gardée au dépôt climatique ou à l'entrepôt non-climatisé. Son pouvoir le moins connu joue au niveau de la sauvegarde et de la restauration. Les archives en collaboration avec des laboratoires améliorent considérablement la qualité de l'image et du son. Peu de gens sont conscients du fait que les archivistes[3] manipulent la pellicule jusqu'à changer le montage, interviennent sur la couleur et la luminosité, nettoient le son, recréent des inserts etc., ceci en fonction de l'état du matériel.

L'Image de soi du restaurateur de film

Il est intéressant de s'arrêter ici et d'examiner un instant l'image de soi du restaurateur de film, responsable de ces changements. Pour moi cette image qui détermine le choix des moyens et le résultat des activités restauratrices a contribué à créer cette illusion.

L'archiviste Vincent Pinel, dans une conférence donné à Cerisy-la-Salle en 1985, expliquait comment sa génération voyait la restauration. Pinel distinguait entre le « restaurateur-archéologue » et le « restaurateur-artiste ».[4] Le premier voit « […] le film comme un vase brisé de grande valeur dont on recolle soigneusement tous les morceaux perdues. […] On obtient ainsi une reconstitution fidèle à la lettre mais d'une présentation ingrate ». Le second est l'opposé: « 'Le restaurateur-artiste' retiendra davantage l'esprit que la lettre. […] Des restaurateurs comme Brownlow ou Patalas préfèrent sacrifier quelques détails du film dans l'intérêt de la lisibilité ou de son équilibre d'ensemble ».[5]

A cette époque les restaurateurs étaient souvent des ex-monteurs qui avaient l'habitude de créer et qui forcément se voyaient plutôt comme des artistes. Ils se permettaient d'intervenir directement sur la pellicule et de corriger dans la structure ce qui selon eux n'allait pas. Par exemple ils éliminaient des intertitres qui soi-disant alourdissaient le rythme de la narration et rendait le film peu acceptable pour un public actuel.[6] Selon Pinel ils gommaient « les manques au lieu de les valoriser »[7] car le concept idéologique diffus de travailler dans le « style » du réalisateur leur permettait de créer ce qu'ils pensaient être en accord avec l' « esprit » de l'auteur. Cette attitude a produit des « versions fantaisistes ». S'y ajoutent des « expériences artistiques » tel le montage en alternance de *Life of an American Fireman*.[8] Ces versions ont circulé et ont eu un impact sur les historiens de cinéma et leur travail sans que ceux-ci aient été au courant des manipulations.

D'autres étaient des ex-employés de laboratoires habitués à suivre les indications du caméraman ou du réalisateur. Ils se voyaient plutôt au service de l'œuvre. Aussi à la recherche du film dans sa « version originale »[9] ils essayaient également de lui rendre sa splendeur, mais en respectant la pellicule dans la forme transmise: « Ils mettaient clairement en évidence les absences ».[10] Cette attitude était nettement moins populaire à l'époque ce qui se laisse déduire d'une remarque de Pinel pour qui, en 1985, la question la plus importante était « […] de savoir ce que l'on veut faire du film reconstitué : une pièce muséologique destinée à intéresser quelques spécialistes ou une œuvre vivante conçue pour toucher un public plus large ».[11]

Aujourd'hui on est loin de penser que rester « fidèle à la lettre » et présenter la restauration au grand public ne sont pas compatibles. L'expérience acquise depuis les années 1980 a amené la profession à une attitude scientifique, plus respectueuse devant l'œuvre de l'autre et avec bien plus de scrupules à manipuler le matériel transmis sur une base hypothétique tel le « style » du cinéaste. Déjà dans les années 1990 avec, par exemple, le programme *Lumière* (Média I) l'attitude changeait. Aujourd'hui ce sont des jeunes universitaires souvent munis d'une formation professionnelle comme le Master du programme *Preservaton and Presentation* de l'université d'Amsterdam, de la Louis Selznick School à Rochester ou de l'East Anglican Film Archive[12] etc. qui sont chargés de la restauration. Leur conscience et leurs efforts pour travailler selon les règles professionnelles établies en partie dans le domaine des Beaux-Arts font d'eux ce que j'appellerais des archivistes-restaurateurs.[13] Bien entendu, il faudrait également interroger leur perception de la profession pour mieux comprendre les paramètres selon lesquels ils effectuent leur travail.

De la pauvreté du matériel sauvé

Avec quoi travaille cette génération actuelle de conservateurs et de restaurateurs ? Afin de répondre à cette question il vaut d'abord la peine de regarder ce qui a subsisté du passé. Selon les livres consultés il y a la perte totale d'un nombre gigantesque de films : « En France, 60% des longues métrages muets et 25% des longues métrages sonores de l'avant-guerre »,[14] 70 à 80% de tous les titres du cinéma muet et du début de la période sonore,[15] 80% des films du cinéma des premiers temps international,[16] 75 à 93% de la production annuelle américaine entre 1914 et 1928.[17]

Vu comme les éléments essentiels de production ont été négligés et même détruis dans le passé, et vu les frais considérables pour garder et migrer des trillions de pixels d'un « *digital-born* » film je ne peux m'imaginer que les producteurs sont et seront prêts à investir beaucoup d'effort et d'argent dans la conservation de l'héritage artistique de leur société.[18] A mon avis la perte de matériaux « analogues » et celle provoquée par la disparition d'éléments numériques causeront inévitablement de grosses lacunes dans le patrimoine cinématographique et ceci *malgré* le grand nombre d'archives cinématographiques dans le monde (la peur des ayant-droits du piratage étant trop grande).

Quant au matériel survécu il s'agit très souvent d'éléments de diffusion, principalement des copies montrées en salle. Ces copies ne portent non seulement des traces de leur utilisation et de l'intervention d'une autorité telle que, par exemple, la censure, mais elles sont par principe les matériaux les moins aptes à servir pour une sauvegarde ou une restauration.

Dans la littérature, on dit que plus les informations sont éloignées de la source première, plus elles perdent en précision. Une nouvelle provenant de troisième main n'est plus fiable. En cinéma cette règle se traduit par une dégradation qualitative: comparé à l'original de « première main » (ce qui serait le négative caméra monté) on constate une perte en netteté, contraste, résolution, peut-être aussi en balance lumineuse, couleurs équilibrées et une augmentation en « nébulosité », c'est-à-dire en flou, grain, perte de détails par une noircissure ou un blanc trop prononcés ou encore des contrastes trop durs. En copiant une copie d'exploitation les défauts s'aggravent.

Quelques éléments de l'image / du son analogues et leur position dans la production professionnelle analogue (exemples) :

Génération	Image	Son	Texte
1ère génération	Négatif camera, chutes du négatif, inversible original	Bande maîtresse magnétique, positive son optique, enregistrement doublage pour post-synchronisation	Intertitres, titres de début / fin
2e génération	Rushes, copie de travail (roughcut, finecut, slash print), positif de duplication	Bande de sécurité magnétique du son original, bande-maîtresse optique étalonnée, négatif son optique, mixage final magnétique	
3e génération	Négatif de duplication	Son optique combiné avec image pour copie de diffusion, bande (de sécurité) optique / magnétique du mixage final	
4e génération	Copie zéro, copie de correction, copie d'essai, copie de distribution		
5e génération	Négatif de duplication d'une copie nitrate		
6e génération	Copie de distribution de ce négatif		

Il faut se le répéter : Qu'est-ce qui en reste d'un film ? En moyenne un élément de 4ᵉ génération, c'est-à-dire une copie de distribution en forme de positif combiné optique, avec des défauts optiques et acoustiques souvent gênants et des manques petits ou grands (tels plan[s], scène[s], séquence[s], intertitres, générique etc.). Qu'est-ce qui en résulte d'une sauvegarde ou d'une restauration ? Soit une *intermediate negative* (5ᵉ génération) et une copie (6ᵉ génération), soit un *intermediate positive* (2ᵉ génération), puis un *intermediate negative* (3ᵉ génération) et une copie (4ᵉ génération).

On peut donc constater : ce que l'archive garde, puis copie voire restaure est d'une qualité audio-visuelle (bien) inférieure à ce que le premier public a vu. L'utilisation du numérique peut améliorer l'impression visuelle – ce qui, par ailleurs, pose d'autres problèmes techniques ou déontologiques – mais ne rendra pas la « virginité » splendide de la version présentée lors de la première.

Le « Babylonien » des termes techniques

Au niveau de la restauration et de la sauvegarde la communication joue un rôle important. Mais elle rappelle parfois la situation en Mésopotamie dans la ville de Babylone. Les archivistes ne parlent pas la même langue: ni au sein de la maison où les techniciens s'expriment dans une sorte de « baragouin » incompréhensible pour leurs collègues documentalistes, libraires, programmateurs et autres, ni entre les institutions du même ordre.[19] Cette « liste d'autorité » provenant de la base de données de la Cinémathèque québécoise Ciné-TV en donne une idée:

> *Négatif original, négatif original combiné magnétique, négatif original combiné optique, négatif haut contraste (pour internégatif), négatif haut contraste (pour interpositif). Internégatif, internégatif combiné optique, internégatif inversible couleurs, internégatif numérique, interpositif, interpositif combiné optique, inversible combiné magnétique, inversible combiné optique, inversible image, inversible original, inversible original combiné magnétique. Positif combiné magnétique, positif combiné optique, positif combiné optique et magnétique.*

Ceci ne sont que les mots utilisés par les francophones. Quant au niveau des relations internationales, les termes techniques sont forcément différents. Mais aussi dans une même langue comme l'Anglais les mots ne sont pas toujours identiques selon que l'on les utilise en Grande-Bretagne ou aux États-Unis.

En plus parmi les techniciens d'une même institution des quiproquos sont possibles car leur conversation est souvent « imprégnée » d'expressions locales qu'ils ont repris de fournisseurs avec lesquels ils travaillent.[20] Un technicien qui vient d'arriver dans une cinémathèque doit d'abord réapprendre la signification des termes tels qu'ils sont utilisés dans son nouvel environnement.

Des quiproquos proviennent aussi d'une compréhension différente d'une expression. Un bel exemple est fourni dans un des livres les plus importants sur la conservation de film. La citation montre que le mot est identique mais que la conception du travail est différent ce qui résulte en une utilisation quelque peu contradictoire du terme :

> *Film restoration is essentially duplication. […] The terms* conservation *and* preservation *are used in either an active way or a passive way and can therefore mean storage or even* duplication without particular interventions *and in principle without any loss of photographic information. The terms* restoration *and* reconstruction *are usually used when differences are created between the material you start with and the material you end with,* through manipulating the process of duplication *(restoration) or through editing sequences in a different order (reconstruction). However, from the*

> *text in this book it will become evident that a standardized* duplication (preservation) without manipulating the photographic duplication process *is almost impossible without loss of photographic quality.*[21]

Résumons les idées du texte : la duplication sans manipulation (un transfert 1:1 donc avec une intensité lumineuse non-variée) n'est presque pas possible (et n'a pas non plus de sens car ceci provoquerait normalement une perte de détails dans l'image). Le terme duplication devrait, par conséquent, faire uniquement partie du vocabulaire de la restauration. Les concepts peu exacts de la conservation / préservation et de la restauration / reconstruction liés en plus à l'idée qu'il y a des « activités passives » et des « tâches actives » – comme si le monitoring du climat, le nettoyage et la réparation de la pellicule avant stockage et la vérification sur table d'embobinage étaient passifs – font que *conservation et préservation* incluent ici la duplication.

Voici un certain nombre de constellations communicatives possibles (la liste n'est pas exhaustive):

Expression	Point de référence	Exemple	Explication
Terme technique différent	Conception du travail identique	Grading (UK) = timing (USA)	Grading / timing = étalonnage
Terme technique utilisé identiquement	Résultat du travail différent	Restauration	Restauration ≠ sauvegarde
Terme technique presque identique	Point de référence différent	Internegative Intermediate negative	Négatif couleur de Kodak pour duplication de pellicule inversible Négatif de duplication, souvent tiré à partir d'un positif de duplication
Terme technique différent	Point de référence presque identique	Lavender, contretype, internégatif, dupe negative, fine grain	Différents types de négatifs
Terme technique faisant référence à un produit spécifique	Application généraliste à un matériel	Fine grain	Nom d'un matériel de Kodak utilisé pour matériel de duplicationnégatif / positif
Terme technique identique	Application différente	Pitch	Pitch = trou de perfo (long / short pitch) + distance entre deux trous
Terme technique emprunté à une autre discipline	Concept a changé sans que ceci soit précisé	Réversibilité	Notion de « réversibilité » utilisée pour l'idée de la « re-faisabilité »

La communication dans le domaine de la conservation est essentielle vu que le matériel est éparpillé un peu partout dans le monde, et notamment parce que la tâche de la restauration demande un échange intellectuel à mon avis obligatoire entre les partenaires. La non-existence d'un langage précis et partagé par la communauté professionnelle complique la collaboration. Est-il rassurant que les Beaux-Arts – après des siècles de pratique de restauration – n'aient également pas encore fixé une terminologie vraiment pointue et universellement partagée ? La conférence que la restauratrice française Ségolène Bergeon a donné en 1997/98 est intitulée *La Terminologie en conservation-restauration : confusion et incidences*. Dans son texte elle donne des précisions relatives à des concepts fondamentaux tels que conservation, patina, patrimoine, préservation, réintégration, restauration et sauvegarde. Elle y dit à juste titre : « La confusion dans le langage est le paravent des ignorants et elle a des conséquences néfastes en matière de prise de décision ».[22]

Comment les archives peuvent-elles garder correctement le patrimoine cinématographique si elles n'ont pas une terminologie commune ? Cette terminologie précise est selon moi l'expression d'une réflexion approfondie et le signe d'une permanente discussion entre professionnels, car elle montre avant tout que la branche en question a des idées claires et des concepts durables qui déterminent et dominent leur comportement professionnel. Le flou dans le travail et le manque de règles sont au détriment du film.[23]

À quand une théorie et un code déontologique impératif ?

Les tâches d'une archive sont : « *to find, rescue, acquire, preserve, finally make accessible* ».[24] On pourrait y ajouter « *to do research* ». De l'exécution professionnelle de ces obligations dépend la survie de notre patrimoine cinématographique.

La restauration des matériaux soi-disant « analogues » nécessitait déjà des règles strictes et des standards. Ceux-ci n'existent pas encore dans la précision que demande une telle tâche. Le travail en numérique en demande davantage, car il permet dans une envergure encore plus grande le « tout est possible ». Le restaurateur Nicola Mazzanti se plaignait il y a déjà 10 ans qu'il n'a pas de « théorie de la restauration cinématographique » :

> *La « restauration » (en mettant le mot entre guillemets jusqu'à ce que l'on trouve une définition acceptable qui indiquerait un concept au lieu d'une agrégation informe de significations souvent contradictoires les unes avec les autres) a été pratiquée pendent des décennies dans les cinémathèques et laboratoires du monde entier sans pourtant réussir à réfléchir sur elle-même pour devenir une pratique. Elle est encore moins une « méthode ».*[25]

Cette situation n'a pas vraiment changé depuis. Entre archivistes, on discute depuis des décades sur la conservation, sauvegarde, restauration des films. Malgré tous ces échanges stimulants lors de colloques ou rencontres entre professionnels n'a pas généré des Brandi, Philippots ou autres restaurateurs-philosophes (mais au moins quelques penseurs-inspirateurs tels, par exemple, Dominique Païni ou Michele Canosa en collaboration avec Gian Luca Farinelli).

Est-ce que ceci est dû au manque d'expérience ? Je ne pense pas. Le film existe depuis presque 120 ans. Comparé aux autres arts il est jeune. Mais 120 ans d'expérience en production analogue et environ 90 ans en archivage analogue signifient plusieurs générations d'archivistes et entre 2 à 3 générations de archivistes-restaurateurs.

La théorie de restauration en beaux-arts et en architecture n'est pas née non plus du jour au lendemain. Mais il y a eu régulièrement des idées et concepts émanés de la pratique en commençant par Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, Camille Boito, Georges Dehio, Alois Riegl, Cesare Brandi, Paul Philippot, Ernst van de Wetering, Ségolène Bergeon pour ne citer que quelques-uns. Cesare Brandi était un contemporain de Henri Langlois, Jacques Ledoux, Ernest Lindgren, mais une discussion théorique entre les deux disciplines muséologiques n'a pas eu lieu à ma connaissance, à part probablement pour Iris Barry au Museum of Modern Art.

Peut-être les archives ont-elles été surmenées par leurs tâches multiples ainsi que leurs batailles contre la méfiance de l'industrie cinématographique, le manque de moyens et la non-reconnaissance de leurs efforts pour sauver un art non-reconnu ce qui résultait longtemps en une non-attribution d'un statut officiel. Trop de NONs à la fois sont épuisants et difficiles à gérer, trop de luttes empêchent d'étudier les autres arts pour mieux définir le propre rôle de l'archive cinématographique.

Peut-être les prédécesseurs ne partageaient-ils pas le besoin que nous ressentons aujourd'hui d'avoir une théorie ? Beaucoup d'archivistes actuels ayant fait des études universitaires ont l'habitude de penser en termes théoriques. La profession a considérablement changé depuis ses débuts. A quand donc une théorie qui dépasserait le niveau d'une liste de standards et qui inclurait des règles déontologiques ? Car comment peut-on sérieusement garder le patrimoine cinématographique pour des « générations futures » si les responsables d'aujourd'hui ne partagent pas les mêmes concepts professionnels.

Résumé

Dans cette article je n'ai donné que quelques exemples pour esquisser la situation actuelle des archives cinématographiques. Je n'ai pas parlé de la reproduction du son et des couleurs, ni des intertitres, ni des conséquences de la double, triple ou quadruple restauration de certains classiques tel *Métropolis* ou *Le Cabinet du Dr. Caligari* (*Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari*), ni du « *clean look* » a-historique de vieux films, ni du style « néo-liberal » du « nouveau management » avec ses conséquences souvent néfastes pour la collection etc.

Mes exemples pris dans la pratiques ont montré – je l'espère du moins – que la nature du film ainsi que la situation des archives cinématographiques dans le passé n'ont pas permis une conservation dupatrimoine cinématographique tel qu'il l'aurait fallu. Le future ne le permettra pas non plus. Aujourd'hui les archives ont plus d'expérience et une meilleure technique à leur disposition, mais dans leur travail et dans leurs méthodes elles manquent toujours d'éléments essentiels tels un vocabulaire précis partagé en commun ou des principes déontologiques universels.

Revenons à l' « Universal Declaration on Archives » du 17 septembre 2010 cité au début. Elle dit: « Sources d'informations fiables pour une gouvernance responsable et transparente, les archives jouent un rôle essentiel dans le développement des sociétés en contribuant à la constitution et à la sauvegarde de la mémoire individuelle et collective ». C'est un désir de notre société d'avoir un soutien de la mémoire collective, une aide afin de ne pas oublier.

Les archives jouent un rôle important dans la création de ce rêve et de sa longévité. Mais après 80 ans de routine archivistique il est évident, pour moi du moins, que l'archive cinématographique ne peut être cette institution rêvée pour garantir la survie de nos images en mouvement, et avant tout pas dans une forme fidèle à leur état de production. En outre, vu que le lieu et la technique de projection ont progressé continuellement et progressent toujours, que les habitudes perceptuelles et la réception des spectateurs subissent périodiquement des changements et que de toute manière chaque film est « lu » différemment par l'individu il serait vraiment étonnant si les institutions conservatrices nous fournissaient une reproduction « exacte » du passé cinématographique.

Mais il nous donne un *simuli*, il nous procure un « artefact » qui peut nous satisfaire autant si en sommes conscients et n'insistons pas pour regarder la « version original » telle qu'elle existait à sa sortie.

Notes

[1] Vincent Pinel, *La Restauration des films*, dans Jacques Aumont, André Gaudreault, Michel Marie (sous la dir. de), *Histoire du cinéma, nouvelles approches*, Publications de la Sorbonne/Colloque de Cerisy, Paris-Cerisy-la-Salle 1989, p. 131.

[2] Traduction allemande de l'*Universal Declaration on Archives* qui, plus que son original anglais et sa

version française, met l'accent sur la responsabilité de l'archive pour le développement de notre société. Pour le texte cf. http://www.ica.org/6574/documents-de-rfrence/dclaration-universelle-des-archives.html, dernier accès 5 juin 2011.

[3] J'utilise la dénomination « archiviste » car elle renvoie à l'employé d'une archive en non pas à sa position dans la hiérarchie (« conservateur », « conservateur en chef ») ou à sa tâche (« restaurateur », « responsable des collections »).

[4] Vincent Pinel, *La Restauration des films*, cit., p. 141.

[5] *Ibidem*.

[6] Pinel disait dans sa conférence : « Doit-on, par souci de la lettre, respecter la totalité des intertitres très explicatifs qui encombrent certains films – du moins quand il s'agit de les recomposer ou de les [= titres flash, SL] mettre à la longueur, ce qui est devenu de nos jours un luxe très coûteux ? Nous ne le pensons pas […]. » Il justifiait son point de vue en renvoyant au film muet : « Lorsque le film était vendu au mètre, les « cartons » représentaient un moyen économique d'allonger le métrage ». Dans *Idem*, p. 142.

[7] *Idem*, p. 141.

[8] André Gaudreault, « Les Détours du récit filmique: Sur la naissance du montage parallèle », dans *Les Cahiers de la Cinémathèque*, n° 29, hiver 1979, pp. 88-107.

[9] Pour Vincent Pinel (dans *La Restauration des films*, cit., p. 136) en 1985 le terme « version originale » est clair et définissable grâce à la législation qui renvoie à « la première copie standard, la copie n° 1 » : « D'après la loi de mars 1957 règlementant le droit d'auteur en France, cette copie représente le véritable point de d'achèvement du film […] ». Aujourd'hui les archivistes-restaurateurs sont plus hésitants vu la multitude de versions différentes autorisées qu'il peut y avoir d'une œuvre.

[10] *Idem*, p. 141.

[11] *Idem*, pp. 141-142.

[12] Cette formation est menacée de disparaître. Cf. http://www.uea.ac.uk/ftv/courses/ma-film-studies-with-film-archive-option, dernier accès 5 juin 2011.

[13] Je me suis inspirée de la dénomination « conservateur-restaurateur » employée par l'International Council Of Museums (ICOM) dans son texte *The Conservator-Restorer: a Definition of the Profession* (1984).

[14] Vincent Pinel, *La Restauration des films*, cit., p. 131.

[15] Paul Read, Mark-Paul Meyer, *Restoration of Motion Picture Film*, Butterworth-Heinemann, Oxford 2000, p. 2.

[16] Ghislaine Jeanson, *Le cineteche in Europa - Film Archives in Europe*, dans Luisa Comencini, Matteo Pavesi (sous la dir. de), *Restauro, conservazione e distruzione dei film*, Il Castoro, Milano 2001, pp. 33-44 ; ni Pinel ni Read/Meyer ni Jeanson ne donnent leur source, c'est-à-dire qui a recherché dans les archives et établi ces pourcentages.

[17] Voir la liste « Survival Rates of American Silent Feature Films », dans *Film Preservation 1993: A Study of the Current State of American Film Preservation, Vol. 1: Report*, Library of Congress, Washington D.C. 1993.

[18] Pour les frais voir, par exemple, *The Digital Dilemma. Strategic Issues in Archiving and Accessing Digital Motion Picture Materials*, The Science and Technology Council of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, Los Angeles 2007, pp. 1-2.

[19] Read/Meyer (*Restoration of Motion Picture Film*, cit., p. 2) constatent dans leur livre qui a réuni 21 contributeurs venant de 14 institutions en 8 pays : « *If somebody speaks for instance of internegatives'*

or 'dupe negatives,' it is not always certain that he or she means the same as you ». Par ailleurs, les archives télévisuelles ont encore une autre terminologie.

[20] *Idem*, p. 317: « *A complicating factorin film terminology is the variation in usage and terms between different laboratories throughout the English-speaking world. [...] It was inevitable that local terms became and some of these spread to their clients [...]* ». Je peux confirmer ceci pour l'Allemagne et les Pays-Bas.

[21] *Idem*, p. 1. C'est moi qui souligne. Voir aussi l'utilisation de « *preservation* » dans Karen F. Gracy, *Film Preservation. Competing Definitions of Value, Use, and Practice*, Society of American Archivists, Chicago 2007, p. 141.

[22] Ségolène Bergeon, « La terminologie en conservation-restauration: confusion et incidences », conférence donnée au colloque « Vers un profil européen du restaurateur de biens culturels », Pavie, 18/10/1997, p. 1. Je remercie Ségolène Bergeon pour ce texte et pour le partage généreux de ses idées à l'époque.

[23] Apparemment la profession a accepté cette situation. Un livre sur la pratique de conservation donne le conseil suivant: « *Like any technical specialty, the film laboratory field has its own vocabulary. Terms sometimes have similar or even identical meanings. Don't be discouraged by the jargon. [...] If you don't understand a term that appears in a lab estimate, just ask* », dans *The Film Preservation Guide. The Basics for Archives, Libraries, and Museums*, National Film Preservation Foundation, San Francisco 2004, p. 46.

[24] Clyde Jeavons, l'ex-directeur du NFTVA à Londres, dans le film de Stefaan Decostere, *BFI 50 Years*, présenté à la RTBF en 1993. Je remercie Stefaan Decostere de m'en avoir passé une copie.

[25] Nicola Mazzanti, *Footnotes (For a glossary of film restoration)*, dans Luisa Comencini, Matteo Pavesi (sous la dir. de), *Restauro, conservazione e distruzione dei film*, cit., p. 14 (citation traduite de l'Italien par Frank Kessler). Voir les réflexions de Marc-Paul Meyer, *Work in Progress: Ethics of Film Restoration and New Technologies*, dans Gamma Group (dir.), *L'Emploi des nouvelles technologies dans la restauration du film: problèmes techniques et éthiques*, s.l., s.d. 1996, pp. 21-28. Voir aussi Sabine Lenk, *Pour une théorie de la restauration de films*, dans Louise Merzeau, Thomas Weber (sous la dir. de), *Mémoire & Médias*, Les Editions Avinus, Paris 2001, pp. 68-80.

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Per la Cinetecofilia[1]

Lavoro stabilmente in un archivio cinematografico dal 1991. Anche se quello dove ho cominciato, il Museo del Cinema di Torino, all'epoca era organizzato praticamente come un normale deposito di film, come quelli che ancora in quegli anni occupavano un'intera via di Torino (via Pomba), dove avevano sede le case di distribuzione. Passare negli stretti corridoi tra uno scaffale e un altro, guardare golosamente le pizze accumulate, una sopra l'altra, percorrere con gli occhi i titoli talvolta quasi illeggibili – sulle scatole a volte un po' arrugginite delle copie più vecchie, e dunque più suscettibili di rivelare sorprese inattese – mi dava un piacere convulso, impaziente, concretizzando con il contatto fisico una delle mie più radicate perversioni cinefiliche (ma anche bibliofile): la lettura dei cataloghi di film, dei distributori, dei collezionisti. Faccio ancora parte di una generazione per cui, quando non si apparteneva a una "buona famiglia", la cultura era una conquista, che si concretizzava, giorno dopo giorno, nella crescita dei libri allineati su uno scaffale di libreria, come per Stardi, il figlio del fabbro ferraio descritto in modo che per me è ancora oggi commovente da Edmondo De Amicis nel libro *Cuore*:

> *Non è ricco, non può comprar molti libri; ma tutti i soldi che gli danno, li spende dal libraio: in questo modo s'è già messo insieme una piccola biblioteca, tre file di libri d'ogni colore, tutti in ordine, lucidi, coi titoli dorati sulle coste; dei libri di racconti, di viaggi e di poesie; e anche illustrati. Ed egli sa combinar bene i colori, mette i volumi bianchi accanto ai rossi, i gialli accanto ai neri, gli azzurri accanto ai bianchi, in maniera che si vedan di lontano e facciano bella figura; e si diverte poi a variare le combinazioni. S'è fatto il suo catalogo. È come un bibliotecario.*[2]

Sfogliare cataloghi, leggere titoli in genere senza alcuna altra determinazione (senza regista, né anno né nazionalità), mi ha sempre provocato un piacere mozartiano, quale quello cantato nel *Don Giovanni*:

Madamina, il catalogo è questo / delle belle che amò il padron mio.
In Italia seicento e quaranta;/ In Almagna duecento e trentuna;
Cento in Francia, in Turchia novantuna; / Ma in Ispagna son già mille e tre.[3]

Ma il verso che meglio descrive il piacere cinefilico è sicuramente quello dove Leporello dice: "delle vecchie fa conquista pel piacer di porle in lista [...]"[4] che nella mia memoria (forse per adattarlo meglio alle operazioni di recupero dei *navet* in cui mi sono fatto talvolta coinvolgere) diventa sempre: "quelle brutte le conquista pel piacer di porle in lista"![5]

È il piacere della conquista casuale quello che mi colpisce nel trovare una copia, ma a volte basta solo un titolo, nella speranza che non si tratti di un caso di omonimia, di un'errata trascrizione. Un piacere che oggi si è dematerializzato nei *database*, che consulto con enorme interesse, ma che non mi suscitano più forti sensazioni. Anche se grazie all'interpretazione dei *records* stampati di un vecchio *database* della Cineteca Nazionale è saltato fuori, nel 2005, il negativo originale di *Roma città aperta* (Roberto Rossellini, 1945), che giaceva dal 1969 indisturbato nei depositi: lì è stata la data a insospettirmi, perché nel 1969 Rossellini era commissario straordinario del Centro Sperimentale e me lo sono immaginato mentre si dava da fare per mettere al sicuro il negativo del suo film. Ancora dall'interpretazione di liste, sono saltati fuori, ad esempio, nel 2008 i tagli che Fellini fece alla copia già definitiva di *Sceicco bianco* (1951) subito prima di proiettarla alla Biennale di Venezia nel 1951: qui, il sospetto nasce dall'indicazione "Sceicco bianco: 2 rulli". Perché 2 rulli? troppo pochi per il film completo, troppi per un *trailer*.

L'ansia concitata con cui percorro ancora le liste, i film fuori catalogo, elenchi scritti a mano da fanatici del collezionismo, si rivela infatti pallida cosa rispetto all'emozione di entrare in un archivio sconosciuto. Come la volta che sono entrato nel deposito morto di Microstampa, vecchio laboratorio romano ormai fuori attività, dove si facevano le lavorazioni a buon mercato, e subito dopo un rullo da 300 in 16mm con su scritto "Pesaro 1969: matrimonio dell'Onorevole Forlani" – evidentemente un *home movie* di uno dei capi della scomparsa Democrazia Cristiana – mi è caduto l'occhio sul negativo di *Nostra Signora dei Turchi* (Carmelo Bene, 1968) e, a seguire, su tutti gli altri film di Carmelo Bene.

Del resto, tutte le volte che per una dozzina d'anni di seguito, sono sceso nei depositi sotterranei della Cineteca Nazionale, nel preciso momento in cui l'improvviso abbassarsi della temperatura provoca un brivido di freddo lungo la schiena, mi tornava in mente il *Nosferatu* (1922) di Murnau: "Oltrepassato il ponte i fantasmi gli vennero incontro...". Una delle più emozionanti metafore mai formulate di un moderno archivio cinematografico: il luogo dove, se opportunamente interpellati, tornano alla luce i fantasmi.

Penso infatti che, per una volta, Jean-Luc Godard avesse torto quando diceva che il destino della cinefilia è lo schermo bianco (tutti ricordiamo la messa in pratica di questa idea in *Im Lauf der Zeit* (1976) di Wim Wenders, dove si chiama così l'"ultimo cinema"). Il destino estremo della pulsione cinefilica, dunque la sublimazione assoluta della visione, si compie in un archivio: toccando le bobine dei film. La vista diventa tatto e olfatto (per sentire se sia già partita la sindrome acetica), per poi diventare di nuovo speranza di un'altra visione.

Questo cinefilo perduto in un archivio – dove per abitare il più stabilmente possibile ha spesso indossato i panni dell'archivista – assomiglia al collezionista descritto da Walter Benjamin in *Je deballe ma bibliothèque. Un discours sur l'art de collectionner*:

> *Ai suoi occhi non sono tanto i libri – i film diremmo noi oggi – ma gli esemplari che hanno il loro destino. E nel suo spirito, il destino chiave di ogni esemplare, è l'incontro con lui stesso, con la sua propria collezione. Non esagero: per il vero collezionista, l'acquisizione di un libro antico equivale alla sua rinascita.*[6]

Il modo più nobile di procurarsi dei libri (dunque dei film), continua Benjamin, è quello di scriverseli. Tra i modi correnti, "quello che più si addice ai collezionisti sarebbe il prestito senza restituzione".[7] Mi pare una descrizione perfetta dell'alba degli archivi, o almeno di una parte di loro, quella più creativa, oggi sicuramente giunta al termine: ma, per chiudere con Benjamin: "È solo nell'ora in cui si estingue che il collezionista viene davvero compreso".[8]

Con le debite eccezioni, si può dire che le raccolte delle cineteche sono nate in genere da decisioni politico-amministrative per gli archivi che gestiscono il deposito legale, oppure mescolando le occasioni del caso con la passione individuale per le "*cinémathèques*" alla Henri Langlois. Per esemplificare dalla situazione italiana, la Cineteca Nazionale nasce dalla legge sul cinema del 1949, detta legge Andreotti dall'allora sottosegretario allo spettacolo, che istituisce il deposito legale dei film italiani, anche se poi verrà reso effettivamente operativo vari anni dopo. Al polo opposto, la Cineteca italiana di Milano, primo archivio cinematografico fondato alla fine degli anni Trenta, e oggi seconda cineteca italiana per ricchezza delle collezioni, nasce dalla passione di un gruppo di amanti del cinema, legati alla rivista "Corrente", tra cui Luigi e Gianni Comencini, Alberto Lattuada, il pittore Luigi Veronesi, il musicologo Luigi Rognoni, ecc.

La ragion d'essere di una cineteca moderna implica oggi una convergenza di questi due poli versi un centro ideale. Ma se l'esigenza di inserire elementi di gestione nelle collezioni private è complessa ma ovvia, la necessità parallela di "fare collezione" negli archivi pubblici è spesso considerata come una provocazione cinefilica. E invece isolare elementi coerenti di collezione nei grandi archivi generalisti è l'unica soluzione per trasformare quelli che rischiano di rimanere dei "depositi" in vere cineteche, suscitando un lavoro estetico di riflessione sulle collezioni, a lato dell'impegno quotidiano di preservazione dei materiali: il che implica, in altri termini, l'elaborazione di una capacità di darsi una forte immagine di sé. Naturalmente ciò implica una nuova politica dei rapporti interni all'istituzione, attraverso l'integrazione della figura del collezionista nel sistema dell'archivistica. Questa figura di "collezionista" diventa sempre più importante nei ranghi dell'archivio soprattutto perché la pellicola non ne ha più per molto, e per questo motivo potrebbe diventare in sé un oggetto da collezionare, ormai privo di "valore d'uso" e ricco solo di "valore di scambio".

La vulgata cinetecaria dice che una copia non ha valore, perché il valore sta nei negativi originali, per le cineteche, o nella facoltà di sfruttamento commerciale dell'avente diritto, mentre per il comune spettatore, l'unico valore sensibile è nei giochi di luce sullo schermo. Ma la situazione oggi si sta complicando notevolmente.

A titolo di aneddoto: Paolo Cherchi Usai, nel suo saggio sulle cineteche (*Storia generale del cinema*, vol. V, Einaudi, Torino 2002), racconta che nell'89 la United Artists decide di regalare tutti i negativi alle cineteche americane per sgravio fiscale, ma la corte federale glielo impedisce dicendo che il negativo non è un bene culturale perché il pubblico non ne può fruire in proiezione. In parallelo, Paolo ricorda che gli eredi di Abraham Zapruder, autore dell'8mm sull'uccisione di Kennedy l'hanno venduto all'archivio di stato USA per 16 milioni di dollari. La decisione del governo americano è davvero così strana? Visto che la legge si applica per analogia hanno semplicemente classificato i negativi come se si trattasse, ad esempio, delle lastre di rame delle incisioni originali di Hogart. Se oggi si riproducessero delle stampe da quelle lastre che valore avrebbero? Certo non quello della tiratura originale.

Le analisi estetiche sui film, cioè sulle copie, sono sempre partite dal fatto che procedimenti industriali di stampa sono neutri e dunque riproducibili all'infinito. Tradizionalmente si pensa che l'originale non fosse ciò che effettivamente si vedeva, ma il negativo a partire dal quale si doveva tirare una nuova copia positiva intercambiabile con le precedenti e le successive, comunque destinata a consumarsi, ma che, di contro, era anche l'unico materiale vedibile in proiezione sullo schermo.

Ancora un aneddoto. Sull'ingenuità tecnica della vecchia critica ironizza Penelope Huston nel suo libro sulla storia degli archivi, *Keepers of the Frame: The Film Archives*[9], dove cita – senza purtroppo farne il nome – un critico inglese che un giorno le avrebbe detto con aria ispirata: "Mi sono sempre chiesto se quella luce che parte da dietro la sala ogni volta che il film centra qualcosa con quel che si vede sullo schermo".

In breve, l'intercambiabilità delle copie derivava dal fatto che: i valori figurativi di un film erano considerati meno caratterizzanti dei suoi valori narrativi (nella pittura classica, ad esempio, è il contrario: il valore di "narrazione" di un quadro barocco è considerato quasi puramente accessorio rispetto ai suoi valori pittorici); i processi di stampa in laboratorio erano considerati quasi neutri e dunque riproducibili *ad libitum*.

Queste due condizioni sono cambiate. Sempre di più diventa chiaro che il cinema è anche un'arte della figurazione; e che i risultati finali dei procedimenti chimici dello sviluppo e della stampa delle copie sono costantemente soggetti a numerose variabili, dovute all'intenzionalità degli operatori (regista, ma anche direttore della fotografia e tecnici di laboratorio) e all'evoluzione del materiale (ad esempio: è molto difficile oggi riprodurre esattamente le tonalità cromatiche del Ferraniacolor, o ripartire dai tre separati originali del Technicolor). Le copie d'epoca sono dunque degli "originali", deperibili come tutti gli originali, e non verranno probabilmente mai più riprodotte "esattamente uguali a com'erano". All'"originale nascosto" che era la caratteristica costitutiva del cinema, si aggiungono dunque ora altri "originali potenziali" che acquisiscono progressivamente un valore antiquariale di collezione, soprattutto nell'ipotesi – ormai sempre più imminente e concreta – della scomparsa della pellicola. Il cinema si allinea così alle altre arti, dove è l'opera-oggetto che ha un valore in sé, anche commerciale e monetizzabile (tanto da rendere difficilmente commerciabile l'arte concettuale al di fuori dei musei), mentre al cinema, spesso, i testi collaterali e derivati (manifesti, disegni, fotografie, programmi, manoscritti) venivano venduti più cari di una singola copia del film priva di valore perché mero *corpus mechanicum* – come i giuristi definiscono la copia materiale per distinguerla dal *corpus misticum* che individua, e glorifica, il diritto di sfruttamento. Questa valorizzazione dell'oggetto-film, impensabile nell'epoca della cinefilia trionfante, è ciò che caratterizza quella che Dominique Païni in *Le Temps exposé* chiama "*l'age du patrimoine*", punto finale di una sorta di percezione di massa del cinema che egli articola in queste fasi: 1850-1908 curiosità scientifica; 1908-1950 piacere; 1950-1968 arte differente contro le belle arti; 1968-1990 piacere e cultura; 1990-oggi patrimonio, documento, testimonianza, traccia, memoria.

La sedimentazione dell'immaginario in patrimonio apre un nuovo e definitivo legame tra il cinema e la tradizione delle belle arti, nel cui dispositivo il cinema entra a pieno titolo attraverso l'oggetto fisico che "lo porta".

Se la magia della luce faceva del cinema "un'arte altra", è ora attraverso la concretezza della materia che diventa "un'arte tra le altre".

L'idea che dell'"oggetto film" sia oggi possibile e anzi spesso indispensabile un restauro, tende a trasformare quello che è sempre stato considerato un semplice supporto, nella materia necessaria alla fruizione ideale di un discorso, cioè, in altri termini, a riconoscere al film il valore di "oggetto d'arte", Il restauro riconnette il film ai dispositivi in atto nelle altre arti, in modo a dire il vero un po' tautologico: se si può restaurare sarà un'opera d'arte. E le procedure del restauro consentono ora di rimaterializzarlo avviando un percorso che porta dal cinema come espressione dell'immaginario alla percezione del film come oggetto da valorizzare in sé e per sé, e dunque dalla considerazione della pellicola come mero supporto delle avventure della luce alla concezione del film, nella sua concretezza materiale, come "singola opera d'arte", dove la "copia" funziona dunque come *principium individuationis*, che partecipa, ma non esaurisce e anzi rende vero, concreto, visibile il "testo ideale ed eterno" (salvo sparizioni e danneggiamenti prosaicamente meccanici), composto dalla totalità dei materiali di un film (negativo, versioni, varianti, stampe, ristampe, ecc.). Mentre la cineteca recupera nel sistema della cultura cinematografica la centralità di un museo ideale, come luogo privilegiato che consente di fondare la lettura critica sulla visione e sul confronto dei testi.

Il rischio ora è che dilaghi una sorta di mistica del restauro che minaccia a tratti di coinvolgere sia i restauratori che gli spettatori e quel che è peggio, anche i cinetecari ormai entrati a pieno titolo nel mercato della comunicazione. Sempre più spesso infatti quel che il pubblico va a vedere non è un film, ma "una copia restaurata". La domanda frequente che i cinetecari si sentono rivolgere è: "la copia è restaurata"? e se si risponde, "no, è una copia buona", la delusione risulta palpabile dall'altro capo del telefono. Sempre più spesso il restauro si sovrappone come marchio estetico che livella rispetto al pubblico i valori estetici delle opere. Mentre invece la rimessa in circolo di copie restaurate raramente finora ha davvero rivoluzionato il "canone dei capolavori", al più l'ha ampliato regolandone la messa a punto. Meccanismo di tenuta che deriva in realtà da un fatto di cui finora ho fatto finta di dimenticarmi: alla fine resta sempre vero che il cinema si muove non soltanto nell'ambito della figurazione ma nello spazio epico del racconto, come ci ha spiegato Christian Metz e che *Metropolis* (Fritz Lang, 1927) fosse un capolavoro lo si capiva anche nella versione corta!

Grande scandalo in Cineteca Nazionale aveva provocato, una quindicina d'anni fa, la richiesta di Peter Kubelka (che sa bene cosa sia un'originale) di ottenere una copia d'epoca del *Gattopardo* (Luchino Visconti, 1963) e non la versione restaurata. Questa ipervalutazione del restauro nasce da un lato come tentativo di affermare l'esistenza di una corporazione ancora debole, quella degli archivisti cinematografici, dall'altro come momento di politica dei media, che trasformano la mitica versione restaurata in un obiettivo di comunicazione autonomo sull'onda della moda. Oltre che al buio dei laboratori e della sala da proiezione, sempre più spesso il "film restaurato" viene esposto alle luci della ribalta degli *sponsor*, con un duplice effetto: epico, perché finalmente si riparla con la dovuta enfasi dei capolavori; ma anche comico, quando disinvolte e inconsapevoli *press agent* rilasciano interviste parlando di "Luchino", senza porsi minimamente il problema che, nel suo tempo, a potersi permettere di chiamare Visconti per nome, saranno state forse venti persone in tutt'Italia.

Ai graffi della pellicola, alla polvere del tempo, si sostituisce, spesso con la complicità attiva di restauratori in cerca di legittimazione, una mano di vernice culturale che può impedire di vedere il film in modo ancora più definitivo.

Mi sembra invece che vada recuperata l'umiltà di fronte all'opera, e quasi una sorta di senso di colpa per la necessità di restaurare un "monumento" che comunque abbiamo lasciato deperire. Lo stesso senso di colpa che può oggi difenderci dalle ipotesi di estremismo del restauro che arriva fino a considerare, di fatto, il restauratore come nuovo autore. Anche se, a queste figure di imbonitori mediatici, che ci ricordano con involontaria ironia i tradizionali "buttadentro" del cinema delle origini, preferiamo contrapporre, per l'ardore della passione, la descrizione che ancora Walter Benjamin ci offre del collezionista:

> *Tiro fuori dalle casse la mia biblioteca. Ecco. Non è dunque ancora messa a posto sui ripiani, la noia leggera della classificazione non l'ha ancora avviluppata. E neppure posso muovermi tra gli scaffali per passare in rivista i libri, accompagnato da uditori amici. Ma eccomi ridotto a chiedervi di venire con me nel disordine delle casse sventrate, in un'atmosfera satura di polvere di legno, su un pavimento ricoperto di carta strappata, tra pile di volumi esumati da poco alla luce del giorno dopo due anni nell'oscurità, affinché, immedesimandovi nel ruolo, voi condividiate un po' l'umore, per nulla elegiaco, anzi, impaziente che questi risvegliano nell'autentico collezionista.*[10]

A questo Archivio-museo si intreccia, nella stessa pratica quotidiana, l'Archivio-anello della catena della valorizzazione economica dell'audiovisivo.

Se nella pratica d'archivio si fonda oggi la permanenza del cinema nel sistema delle arti, al tempo stesso, gli archivi cinematografici ritrovano un ruolo centrale nell'economia dell'audiovisivo proprio a partire dalle modificazioni di mercato. La garanzia del restauro diventa il valore aggiunto in previsione dello sfruttamento intensivo sui media, in DVD, TV satellitari e digitali, Internet, cellulari. E anche questo passaggio a una concezione patrimonialistica del cinema, implica una mutazione radicale dei dispositivi di gestione politico-culturali.

La valorizzazione delle *libraries* dovuta ai nuovi media, cambia la geografia dell'audiovisivo. Il punto più periferico, la Cineteca, è diventata infatti uno dei nodi centrali del sistema, perché contribuisce a fornire nuovi master per l'emissione. A un livello tale, che oggi si può tranquillamente sostenere che il denaro pubblico investito nella conservazione dovrebbe essere tolto dai fondi per la cultura, e considerato contribuzione differita al settore privato che ne gode in effetti i benefici economici.

Ma questo è un altro discorso... un discorso che oggi, rovesciando una definizione di Luigi Chiarini, ci porterebbe a parlare del cinema come di "un'arte che è anche un'industria".

Questa forte interazione con i media si abbatte su istituzioni archivistiche ancora deboli, perché – almeno in Italia – non inserite nel sistema pubblico delle belle arti, strutturato da secoli, e che se probabilmente avrebbe soffocato sul nascere l'entusiasmo con cui sono stati fondati gli archivi cinema, oggi con la forza della burocrazia, potrebbe proteggerli dalle attenzioni eccessive della politica. A confronto con gli archivi cinematografici, infatti, una delle molte cose che hanno suscitato la mia invidia è la stabilità delle altre istituzioni archivistiche e bibliotecarie.

Le cineteche oggi, restano invece maggiormente soggette a una certa vaghezza nella definizione da parte dei poteri pubblici di nuove *missions* più spesso evocate che descritte. Come riferirne la vaga prosopopea? Potremmo forse definire questa nuova corrente di pensiero amministrativo come la politica del "ben altro". Sempre più spesso infatti, quando si espongono le banali esigenze archivistiche (es. conservare i film), ci si sente invariabilmente rispondere: "ben altri sono i problemi". E invece le esigenze di salvaguardia del patrimonio cinematografico possono essere tradotte ancora in enunciati semplici e di tutta evidenza. Anche se assolutamente fuori moda, anzi, addirittura un po' stupidi nella loro ovvietà: competenza, soldi, tempo. Dargli effettivamente concretezza, naturalmente, è un'altra questione.

Questa fase di modernismo "benaltristico" ha determinato in varie istituzioni una condizione di instabilità, particolarmente perniciosa nella gestione delle grandi istituzioni dove, il problema principale consiste nel non essere travolti dalla mole, dal peso e dall'ingombro fisico dei materiali conservati. E soprattutto ci vuole stabilità, perché l'esperienza che mi sono fatto in questo campo, mi porta a dire che un'istituzione archivistica può sopravvivere a lungo, per inerzia, a un direttore imbecille, ma non può assolutamente reggere un genio diverso tutti gli anni. Dunque, in un ideale corso di formazione rivolto ai decisori politici mi permetterei di ricordare che il cinema (e il suo archivio) "non è solo del cinema". O meglio, che il cinema oggi è un sistema di pensiero complesso, diciamo come l'ingegneria, o la medicina, o la fisica. E così come nessun amministratore si sognerebbe di assumere un ingegnere, senza preoccuparsi di decidere se gli serve per costruire un ponte e per progettare del *software*, è ora di rendersi conto che anche il cinema è oggi un campo assai vasto da aver sviluppato competenze diversificate.

Analogo problema di definizione del proprio campo professionale riguarda gli stessi cinetecari. A cui, me compreso naturalmente, mi permetterei di fare una raccomandazione esattamente contraria, sottolineando che: il cinema "è solo del cinema".

L'autoritratto del mestiere in effetti, è evoluto in direzione di un tecnicismo che dovrebbe essere sinonimo di rigore, a discapito dell'interesse per il confronto tra le idee. Ricordarsi che "stiamo solo facendo del cinema" – e mi piacerebbe poterlo dire anche nel senso in cui lo intende Robert De Niro nella parte di Irving Thalberg in *Gli ultimi fuochi* (1976) di Elia Kazan – implica invece a mio avviso, il coraggio di ritrovare la centralità dei film e della necessità di riprendere a guardare il cinema con gli occhi. È interessante notare come quest'arte "impura" per eccellenza, sopporti davvero male qualunque tentativo di purificarla attraverso non importa quale espediente. E questo può essere soprattutto una via d'uscita per salvarci dalla confusione pericolosa che mescola la cultura alla comunicazione e che sottopone sempre più spesso gli archivi alla tentazione di concordare, come dicevo prima, le priorità con gli *sponsor* e dunque – come avviene sempre più spesso in Italia – di "restaurare" sempre gli stessi grandi capolavori, che diventano sempre più splendidi, di decennio in decennio, a danno di titoli non altrettanto mediatizzabili.

Insomma, il mio mestiere è cambiato dal secolo scorso, quando ho cominciato a impararne i rudimenti. Non potrei più guardare come modello ideale alla definizione che Jean Cocteau dava di Henri Langois: "*Le dragon qui mont la garde devant la caverne des nos tresors*". L'archivista-drago: mito "maschile" per antonomasia. Analizzando invece i saperi che sembrano oggi necessari a sopravvivere con e dentro gli archivi, mi sembra che sia necessario ritrovare attitudini – spero di non venir rimproverato per eccessivo maschilismo – tradizionalmente considerate come "femminili", in tutte le accezioni classiche della visione – per l'appunto – maschile del ruolo.

In primo luogo bisogna sapersi guardare allo specchio.

Lo sottolineo per primo perché, ancora oggi, lavoro per un'istituzione che non ha ancora imparato a farlo bene, e quando pensa a ciò che è, cioè quando si guarda allo specchio, si vede come una specie di servizio di stato civile e non come un museo. Mentre per far fronte ai doveri imposti dal suo ruolo, e anche per fare fronte, se necessario, alle lusinghe dei media e alle intromissioni tipiche della mano pubblica (attiva a intermittenza, e forse non solo in Italia): bisogna sapere bene chi si è.

In secondo luogo, è necessario essere delle buone massaie. Non è vero che i problemi sono "ben altri": il vero problema è fare i lavori di casa, giorno dopo giorno, pulendo bene anche sotto i mobili e negli angolini, e per poterli fare bisogna contare su un personale che a sua volta sa chi è e in quale istituzione vuole vivere e lavorare con l'orgoglio del proprio ruolo.

Infine, è meglio – perché rende la vita più facile – imparare a esercitare anche il vecchio mestiere della tenutaria di bordello: dunque, far entrare nella *maison* più gente che si può, farla uscire contenta soddisfacendo i desideri di ciascuno (e anche le perversioni, se è vero, come dice Karl Kraus che "sono le metafore dell'amore, come le metafore sono le perversioni del linguaggio"), e soprattutto: non dimenticare di farsi pagare la *passe*.

Note

[1] Riprendo il titolo "Per la Cinetecofilia" da un volantino militante distribuito nei primi anni Settanta da un gruppo di cinefili milanesi, e scritto probabilmente da Alberto Farassino e Tatti Sanguineti, in polemica contro l'allora conservatore della Cineteca Italiana di Milano, Walter Alberti.

[2] Edmondo De Amicis, *Cuore*, Mondadori, Milano 1984, pp. 72-73.

[3] Lorenzo Da Ponte, *Don Giovanni*, http://www.librettidopera.it/dongiov/dongiov.html, ultimo accesso 23 gennaio 2012.

[4] *Ibidem*.

[5] *Ibidem*.

[6] Cito dalla versione francese che è quella che ho letto: Walter Benjamin, *Je déballe ma bibliothèque*, Rivage Poche, Paris 2000 (mia traduzione).

[7] *Ibidem*.

[8] *Ibidem*.

[9] Penelope Huston, *Keepers of the Frame: The Film Archives*, British Film Institute, London 1994.

[10] Walter Benjamin, *Je déballe ma bibliothèque*, cit.

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Vintage Film Elements: A Neglected Source for Film History Writing. A Case Study of Fritz Lang's *Spione* (1928)

Is there an interaction between the writing of film history and the various vintage elements of a film that may have survived in film archives worldwide? One would expect that a film's proliferation, meaning the sum of a film's existing contemporary distribution prints and negatives, is the premise for writing about film history. However, this is not necessarily the case, as can be shown by Fritz Lang's *Spione* (1928). At the Murnau-Stiftung in 2004, we worked on a restoration for which we conducted worldwide research for vintage film elements. Among them were materials that had not been analyzed before, which gave the impression of the gap between a film's proliferation and what is written in history books.

This paper argues that the politics of film archive's preservation and restoration legitimise a definition of film as an artefact that can be regarded as an image independent from its material base. These politics lead to a neglected consideration of vintage elements and therefore a lack of historical perspective on film.

Film archives are usually confronted with different "originals" of a film, such as camera negatives and prints from different distribution areas, which differ in regards to their content and technical aspects.

On the contrary, film historians usually work with elements that are already the result of an archivist's work based on a film's proliferation. These archive versions are usually the result of more or less severe interpretive interventions on the film's proliferation. Due to a film archive's politics of access, as well as a usually random proliferation all over the world, film historians tend to ignore these interventions. Film historians also tend to focus on the film's content and ignore its format. Film archives are therefore pre-structuring film history first by selecting which versions of a film are preserved and later made available, and secondly through their technical, aesthetic, and content-related interventions during preservation or restoration.

My aim is to introduce an understanding of film as an interaction of its content and material base, which permit to consider vintage elements as a source for the writing of film history. I will therefore show how the proliferation of Fritz Lang's *Spione* alters how it should be regarded, especially when it is compared to an analysis restricted to the versions made accessible by archives.

For decades, *Spione* has been known in the form of one not otherwise identified English titled version from 16mm and video releases.[2] This version is almost about half as long as the first release print.[3] Plot descriptions of the film in literature on Fritz Lang show that this version is the one usually consulted.[4] It is agreed amongst film scholars that this film is a suspense classic, a sequel to *Dr. Mabuse, der Spieler* (1922), and an introduction of new objectivity into Fritz Lang's oeuvre. Although Lang's stylistic re-invention, especially his effective use of close-ups, is acknowledged, compared to *Dr. Mabuse, der Spieler*, *Die Nibelungen* (1924) or *Metropolis* (1927), *Spione* is considered less important in Fritz Lang's silent oeuvre.

In the 1970s, a duplicate copy of the film was made from a more complete version held at Gosfilmofond Moscow. This copy, which represents a non-identified version, was made accessible in the context of a first attempt to restore a full-length German version by the Munich film museum. It is less well known than the short English titled version, since the restoration was not commercially distributed. Moreover, it neither leads to a re-evaluation of previous classifications of *Spione* when it was consulted on rare occasions, nor provoked a critical comparison of both versions or any source criticism.[5]

In 2004, at the Murnau-Stiftung, we also worked on a new restoration with the aim to improve the 1970s restoration's image quality. We discovered five different prints while conducting research worldwide. Three were distribution prints from the 1970s that were found at the Cinémathèque Française in Paris, Filmarchiv Austria in Vienna, and the National Film and Sound Archive in Canberra. The other two prints were made from a camera negative that no longer exists. They were found at Gosfilmofond in Moscow and Národní Filmový Archive in Prague.

The version is currently available internationally on DVD,[6] and 35mm prints were made for cinema screenings.[7] The DVD editions were usually announced as a suspense classic by Fritz Lang, which recalls how the first post-war 16mm and later video releases were described.[8]

Nevertheless, the work on the film's restoration turned out to be a starting point for a re-evaluation based on a comparison of the mentioned source materials.[9] The materials differ from one another considerably in regards to completeness and editing. Therefore, an important part of the restoration work was the comparison of the different versions and an examination of the variants' origins.

The result of this restoration is a new version as close to Fritz Lang's intentions as possible. Though it relies on a critical examination of other versions, it does not represent the whole story told by its proliferation. During the process of comparing different versions, one gained insight into the mode of the film's foreign distributions, including how different distributors have interpreted Fritz Lang's film according to an assumed spectator's taste. Moreover, one learned a lot about the working process during the shooting, as well as about films labs procedures of that period, which both provided valuable information regarding the identification and dates of the materials.

In general, the aim of a restoration is to create a version that is as close to the author's intentions as possible. This approach nourishes a view on versions that regards them as the result of a film's manipulations by commercially or politically motivated interests of producers, distributors or censors that contradict the author's intentions. I would like to argue that an archive's preservation practice should be reorganized to make it utilizable for the writing of film history. The last restoration of *Spione* provided the opportunity to analyze the differences of the various source materials and could therefore be regarded as an instrument to explore and collect all relevant data. The creation of versions leaves visible traces in the physical shape of each material. A consideration of vintage elements, an awareness of the material base of film, leads the film historian to new tasks that may be compared with the work of an archaeologist. To gain historically reliable conclusions from an element, it first has to be dated and identified. Features such as splices, film manufacturer's edge codes, shape of perforation, traces of the film laboratories' practices, and photographic characteristics are the relevant categories for this work.

By using this method, we could relate the three contemporary prints to their distribution areas. For example, the oldest is a shortened print with German titles.[10] It was originally complete and represented a German distribution print, which was most likely printed before May 1928. This print was considerably shortened at a later point in time. Between May and September 1928, one of the English titled prints was produced, which could be related to the British distribution.[11] The print with English titles, which was the source for 16mm and early video releases, represents the American version.[12] It was produced after September 1928. All three prints are extremely shortened; each of them in a different way. The only surviving versions, which come closer to the length of the first release in February 1928, are the archive duplications of a lost camera negative.[13]

A complete German version must be considered lost. The editing and narrative structure of the first German version can only be deduced by a comparative reading of the surviving film elements and according documents like censorship files, stills and reviews.[14] A comparison of the narrative structure of the reconstructed German version with the British and the American version shows that each distributor integrated his own interpretation of Lang's film into his print. Whereas Fritz Lang had constructed a complex narrative structure in which he created an intellectual game of the suspense genre, the American and British versions provide examples for a transformation of Fritz Lang's text into classical who-done-its.

A shot-by-shot comparison of the four versions shows that variability was already present in the set during the shooting of the film. The materials consist of different takes of a shot. Shooting happened in general with at least two cameras that were at the same time filming a shot. Additionally, the shot was repeated several times. The combination of both methods allowed to receive as economically as possible a sufficient number of alternate takes of a shot out of which several "original" camera negatives were edited for the various international distribution markets.[15] This mode of production is typical of this period, especially with large productions, which aimed at an international distribution. Latest since the founding of the Ufa distribution site in New York in September 1924 it seemed to be common to edit at least three negatives as the negative for the US and Canadian market was usually sent to the Ufa affiliate in New York. With the Parufamet contracts the relevance of this practice increased. The contracts arranged that the US-Majors were free regarding their mode of distribution of Ufa films in the USA. One premise for this freedom was to provide over an own negative,[16] which enabled the distributor to introduce changes into the film easily. Instead of editing every single print, he re-edited the negative and printed the necessary amount of prints from this negative.

For *Spione*, three negatives were edited, from which one was sent to New York. From this negative the print at Cinémathèque Française in Paris was printed. The other two negatives remained with Ufa in Berlin.[17] From one of them the print at the Filmarchiv Austria in Vienna and the British distribution print at the National Film and Sound Archive in Canberra were printed. From the other negative no contemporary prints have survived, but two archive duplications in Moscow and Prague. In consideration of the period's specific mode of production it is possible to evaluate possible differences between the three negatives, which result from a parallel and successive filming of alternate takes. Filming a shot with two cameras in parallel has the advantage of two takes with identical acting. The disadvantage is that the camera angle can vary heavily depending on the size of framing or that there are grave variations between the distance between camera and object in the case that different lenses had to be applied. These problems can be avoided by repeating the take, having the disadvantage of possible variations in acting. From the different effects of both techniques, the following categories can be established: actor's position, variation in acting, framing, frame size, camera movement and regarding sequences, continuity. A comparison of the three existing takes of a shot shows in several cases differences in quality. As a result, the two negatives used for the German, British, US and Canadian market, contain the takes of the best quality. The third negative contains numerous takes in which the acting of some of the actors is less good as well as takes with a less ideal framing or camera movement and sequences which show a rough continuity or even mistakes in continuity.

The comparison proofs how important the framing as a stylistic mean was for *Spione*, especially regarding closer frame sizes:

> *Lang begins in this film to favour much closer framing and builds up scenes through fragments rather than the broader, more architectural long shots of his earlier films. Lang frames more daringly here and and off screen space becomes a major player in his style.*[18]

In consequence, photographer Fritz Arno Wagner had to concentrate on successive rather than on parallel filming as for narrow frame sizes it is not possible to film a shot with two cameras in parallel without introducing grave variants between them.

On the other side, a stylistic concept that bases on the montage rhythm of numerous short and close-ups, allows a great variability regarding the editing. The mentioned modes of production and distribution raise the question in how far Fritz Lang was actively contributing to the production of different versions by introducing into his editorial work and narrative style a concept of multiplicity.

The print from the British distribution turned out to be a key document. A shot-by-shot comparison of the German-titled print and the British print proofs that both were printed from the same negative. By the above mentioned average dating of the prints we can deduce that this negative was the first of the three to be edited and from which therefore the German distribution prints were drawn. Both prints were produced in the same laboratory as can be seen from printing marks[19] in the film's margin. The degree of printed-in damages like scratches and dirt that were present in the negative at the time of the prints' production proofs that the British print was drawn later than the German-titled print. A closer examination of the British print shows that all shortenings and re-editings were introduced in the negative: if the print lacks a shot or a sequence or if they appear in a different part of the film compared to the German-titled print, these cuts are already carried out in the negative. This is of relevance as outside the US market Ufa would usually provide a complete print and the distributor would alter this print.[20]

The fact that the negative for the German market was shortened and edited on behalf of the British distributor's wishes, points to the importance of the British market for Ufa. Due to its colonial power, Great Britain constituted a great sales territory for Ufa. In addition, Great Britain's own low film production activities created a demand for export article.[21] Fritz Lang's part in this context is not so much relevant regarding artistic aspects, but regarding business.

For Fritz Lang *Spione* meant a new start in various respects. After the large productions of *Die Nibelungen* and *Metropolis* he was working with a comparably small budget and was returning not only to the detective and crime film genre of his early years, but also acting as a producer for the first time.

The reasons for the changed working conditions can be found in the previous production *Metropolis*. The huge production costs, which exceeded the planned budget, and the lack of commercial success almost ruined Ufa. The production company regarded Lang as responsible for the disaster, and tried everything to get rid of him, but failed to cancel the existing contract.[22] As a result, *Spione* became the new project to be started.[23] To control the budget, Ufa agreed on Lang's participation in the production costs. Lang reacted by founding his own production company with the co-partners Fellner & Somlo.[24] He used the combination of coming back to a well experienced genre and restricted budget to redefine himself. Contemporary film critics stated this as a main aspect of the film and developed their judgement over the film from this declaration.[25] *Spione* presents well-known subjects in a new form: on the one side, chases like in *Die Spinnen*, Rudolf Klein-Rogge once more as super criminal like Mabuse. One the other side, a reduced set design instead of monumentality, a preference for close framing and effectively edited images instead of the architectonic images of his previous films. Besides this stylistic re-invention, the focus on editing can be read as a strategy to acknowledge the experience that distributors would engage in the film's text – and Lang had experienced this before with *Metropolis*. As can be seen especially in the US and UK prints, Fritz Lang's film provided an ideal model for disassembling the film and refiguring it according to each distributor's ideas. An essential part of Fritz Lang's concept for *Spione* was to avoid any surprises; Haghi, the criminal mastermind even introduces himself to the spectator in the first minutes of the film. What follows is a game with the genre's conventions. The large cast defines the film's structure. Lang uses the genre typical elliptic storytelling for an artful choreography of the numerous characters and their relations.

The British version reorganizes Lang's narrative structure and thereby achieves that Haghi is introduced much later in the film, which essentially changes Lang's play with the familiar ingredients of the genre into a classical who-done-it. The US version also follows the concept of the who-done-it, but with the aid of other narrative strategies: it eliminates large parts of the sub-plot as well as the cast to achieve a focus on a central conflict. Using a modern film language, Lang shows that he is counting on the internationality of the genre. The export-compatible genre of the thriller guarantees good earnings in foreign countries, too. His profit sharing in the export market motivated Lang to participate actively in the export business. Even before he started shooting the film, he dealt successfully in a distribution contract with the company W&F London, confronting Ufa with accomplished facts. C.M. Woolf, head of the company was arranging a ceremonial reception for Fritz Lang and Thea von Harbou in London in the end of September 1927.[26] This visit was obviously preceded by negotiations which resulted in a distribution contract between Lang's co-partners Fellner & Somlo and C.M. Woolf regarding the film's distribution in Great Britain.

Nevertheless Ufa's concern and scepticism regarding Lang's procedure,[27] this contract was finally approved by Ufa. The resulting revenues for Fellner & Somlo were balanced against Ufa's production costs.[28]

Fritz Lang's stylistic re-invention is not an artistic operation alone, but moreover a pragmatic decision in reaction towards the changed artistic and economic working conditions he found at Ufa after *Metropolis*. His modern montage technique allows to employ shots and sequences of *Spione* like *Versatzstücke* (set pieces), out of which every distributor might generate the version which appears to him the most useful. Before *Spione*, Lang's films were making an intervention into the film's text a difficult operation due to their architectonic elaborate large shots. The disassembling of a scene into many close shots results into a new variability of the editing. As Lang was himself involved in the negotiations with the British distributor, it is probable that he accepted a recreation of his film for the British market.

What does this mean for the archive? My brief analysis of the distribution history of Fritz Lang's film *Spione* has shown the extent to which the writing of film history should include the analysis of a film's proliferation and it's material base. It is worthwhile to investigate what lies beyond the image, for the consideration of a film's proliferation indicates that film archives focus on creating better versions instead of focusing on the historic value of the proliferation itself, thus ignoring that the idea of multiplicity is innate to silent film.

Notes

[1] This paper is basing on my study of the proliferation of film elements and documents of *Spione:* Anke Wilkening, *Filmgeschichte und Filmüberlieferung. Die Versionen von Fritz Langs Spione 1928*, in Günter Agde, Jeanpaul Goergen, Michael Wedel (eds.), *Filmblatt-Schriften, Beiträge zur Filmgeschichte*, Band 6, Cinegraph, Berlin 2010.

[2] Distribution by Blackhawk. According to the research carried out in 2004 for the restoration, this version is hold by the following FIAF archives: British Film Institute, London; Cinemateca Brasileira, Sao Paulo; National Archives of Canada, Ottawa; Pacific Film Archive, Berkeley; UCLA Film and Television Archive, Los Angeles.

[3] According to the censorship file, the first release version, which premiered on March 22 in 1928 at Ufa-Palast am Zoo in Berlin, was 4358,1m long (see Gerhard Lamprecht, *Deutsche Stummfilme 1923-26*, Berlin 1968. The censorship file no. 18508 from March 21, 1928 is not proliferated). In the trade magazines the premiere print's length is stated with 4354m (see *Kinematograph*, no. 1101, March 25, 1928; *Filmjournal*, no. 15, March 25, 1928; *Reichsfilmblatt*, no. 12, March 24, 1928).

[4] Older publications like Eisner's book on Fritz Lang, clearly show that this version was used (Lotte Eisner, *Fritz Lang*, Da Capo Press, New York 1976, pp. 95-105). More recent authors like Tom Gunning are taking into consideration another version, which is considerably longer (Tom Gunning, *The Films of Fritz Lang: Allegories of Vision and Modernity*, BFI Publishing, London 2001, pp. 117-138).

[5] Both Lotte Eisner and Tom Gunning comment on the considerably shortened English version in comparison to the original length of the German version. Lotte Eisner points out how the cuttings especially of the supporting cast of this version have affected Lang's original concept: "Fritz Rasp an elegant Rastaquère in waxed moustache, collects a poste restante letter by means of a complicated logarithmic trick, leaving the amazed detective with a piece of paper left blank by vanishing ink. In the cut versions available today Rasp appears merely as an amusing episodic figure. In fact the character was based on the real-life case of the Austrian Colonel-General Redl, who betrayed his country's secrets, and whose tragic story was recorded by Egon Erwin Kisch. Lang was fascinated by the story and in the original version of *The Spy* it was developed right up to his suicide, at the advice of the general staff (which provided the revolver) to safe him from public disgrace. Even apparently episodic sequences, however, are never irrelevant or unimportant; everything is interconnected. Lang often uses important actors for small roles, since there are really no minor parts as far as he is concerned." (Lotte Eisner, *Fritz Lang*, cit., p. 98). Tom Gunning is consulting in addition to the shortened version a longer version that he describes as the German version. Most probably this is a version going back to the Moscow element. Despite describing several differences between both versions, he tends to relativize them and hence negates their individual proliferations. See e.g. his estimation regarding the variations in introducing the master criminal Haghi by the famous close-up in which the character is directly addressing the spectator: "Although the issue is posed more elegantly and directly in the German prints with the close-up, both version raise and answer the question of agency right at the beginning of the film." (See Tom Gunning, *The Films of Fritz Lang: Allegories of Vision and Modernity*, cit., p. 287).

[6] The 2004 restoration of *Spione* by Friedrich-Wilhelm-Murnau-Stiftung, Wiesbaden, has been published by the following labels: Kino Video, Fritz Lang Epic Collection 2004; Kino Video, DVD 2004; Transit Classics Deluxe Edition, 6 DVD Set 2007; Eureka!, DVD 2007; mk2, DVD 2007; Books Kinokuniya, DVD 2007; Divisa Home video, DVD 2009.

[7] 35mm print, 1:1,33, 4111m, 150 min. at 24 frames per second, distributed by Transit Film, München.

[8] Kino International announces in their catalogue: "Previously seen in the U.S. in a severely truncated form, Fritz Lang's elaborate superspy thriller is at last restored to its proper length. Rudolf Klein-Rogge stars as Haghi, the head of an elaborate criminal empire, and Willy Fritsch is the undercover

agent assigned to topple the diabolical king from his throne. Filled with the sexual intrigue and high-tech gadgetry that continue to define the genre, Spies remains remarkably contemporary, even 75 years after its premiere." (See http://www.kino.com/video/item.php?product_id=833, last access January 2012). Eureka announces in their catalogue: "Fritz Lang's penultimate silent film, Spione [Spies], is a flawlessly constructed labyrinthine spy thriller. [...] Made by Lang's own production company and, like M and Metropolis, written by Lang with his wife Thea von Harbou, Spione is 'the Grandaddy of decades of intrigue epics. In its rigorous austerity it remains the most modern of the bunch.'" (Elliott Stein, *Village Voice*, see http://eurekavideo.co.uk/moc/catalogue/spione/, last access January 2012).

[9] The analysis of the film's proliferation let to new considerations of the film as in the DVD documentary by Guido Altendorf and Anke Wilkening: *Ein kleiner Film, aber mit viel Action*, Friedrich-Wilhelm-Murnau-Stiftung 2006, betacam digital, 70 min, published on the above mentioned DVD editions which were published after 2006 and the study by Anke Wilkening, *Filmgeschichte und Filmüberlieferung*, cit.

[10] Hold at Filmarchiv Austria, Vienna, 35mm distribution print, nitratecellulose, 1:1,33, 3074m, German intertitles.

[11] Hold at National Film and Sound Archive, Canberra, 35mm distribution print, nitratecellulose, 1:1,33, 2971m, English main and intertitles. The credits contain the name of the British distributor: C.M. Woolf. The changed names for some of the characters in the credits, intertitles and inserts correspond to those in the distribution booklet (see *C.M. Woolf presents The Spy*, booklet by W.&F. Film Services Ltd., collection British Film Institute, London).

[12] Hold at Cinémathèque Française, Paris, 35mm distribution print, nitrate-cellulose, 1:1,33, 2279m, English main and intertitles. The film manufacturer's edge codes show that Kodak film stock from 1928, which was fabricated in Canada, was used for this print. Ufa's affiliate, Ufa Films Inc. in New York was responsible for the distribution in USA and Canada. The changed names for some characters in the intertitles correspond to credits with an according logo of MGM, which were found in the element from Gosfilmofond Moscow and therefore confirm the US origin of the version in Paris.

[13] Hold at Gosfilmofond Moscow, 35mm archive print and dupe negative, nitrate-cellulose, 1:1,33, 3725m, English main titles, English intertitles (in the first part of reel 1), German flash-titles and Národní Filmový Archiv, Prag, 35mm archive print, nitrate-cellulose, 1:1,33, 3872m, Czech main and intertitles. Both elements originated from the same source. For the Czech print, all titles were exchanged against Czech titles in full length.

[14] Especially three stills from the stills collection of Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv in Berlin that show scenes which are not existing in any of the film materials and a second submission of the film to the censorship office in Berlin shortly after the premiere on March 22 in 1928 give the impression of an elaborate and very complex narrative structure of the first release German version. The stills indicate that sub-plots like Haghi's blackmailing of Lady Leslane, Haghi's denunciation of Oberst Jellusic and the rendezvous of no. 326 and Sonia in the Café Danielli were including more scenes than are existing today.

[15] An article from 1924 describes Fritz Lang's method of shooting a scene with two cameras in parallel and repeating it between eight and ten times. (See "Die Kunst des Schneidens und Klebens," in *Film-B.Z.*, no. 103, April 13, 1924).

[16] See Luciano Berriatúa, Camille Blot-Wellens, *Zur Überlieferung der Filme*, in Hans Helmut Prinzler (ed.), *Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau, Ein Melancholiker des Films*, Bertz, Berlin 2003, p. 225.

[17] The journal of a meeting of the Ufa management on November 12, 1928 documents that at this time one negative was in the USA and two in Berlin. See *Niederschrift Nr. 419 über die Vorstandssitzung vom 12.11.1928*, Bundesarchiv R 109/1027a.

[18] Tom Gunning, *The Films of Fritz Lang: Allegories of Vision and Modernity*, cit., p. 118.

[19] "If several printing machines are necessary for the production, it is requested to detect from the finalized film with which of the machines the printing had been carried out. Only in this case a quick and safe elimination of mistakes is possible. [...] A very simple marking of the different printing machines can be achieved by an introduction of small marks in the margin of the image aperture." A. Meißner, "Eine gute Idee," in *Die Kinotechnik*, no. 3, November 1919, p. 24 (my translation).

[20] As we can see from several contracts between Ufa and foreign distributors, usually the export prints were produced in Germany and shipped to the licensees. See various licence contracts from 1923 to 1929 (Bundesarchiv Berlin R 109 I/5434).

[21] See discussions about the relevance of the British market for Germany in German trade journals of the mid 1920s like *Kinematograph* (Joseph Delmont, "England und Deutschland," in *Kinematograph*, no. 926, November 16, 1924, p. 18).

[22] See *Niederschrift Nr. 6 über die Vorstandssitzung vom 11.4.1927*, no. 22, May 3, 1927, Bundesarchiv Berlin R 109 I/1026q.

[23] See *Notiz vom 2.6.1927*, Akte Langfilm, Bundesarchiv Berlin R 109/5128, p. 3.

[24] See *Betr., Fritz Lang, V. 435 c.*, June 23, 1927, S. 1, 2, Akte Langfilm, *ibid.*; *Betr., Fritz Lang, V. 435 c.*, June 28, 1927, S. 1, Akte Langfilm, *ibid.*; *Kinematograph*, no. 1063, July 10, 1927 and *Kinematograph*, no. 1065, July 17, 1927.

[25] "The tragedy of the lower part of the city of *Metropolis*, the mésalliance of brain and hand, has now shown its consequences: Fritz Lang has finally resigned from the preponderance of the brain in his plot and has allocated towards the most palpable hand. [...] and since one cannot build and destroy a *Metropolis* every day, in time of need, the regular secret contract does it, which was already occupying the film spies 20 years ago [...]." ("Kritik der Leinwand," in *Filmwoche*, no. 14, 1928, p. 377, my translation). "With his new film Fritz Lang is adapting himself for a conquest of the world market. He is pursuing this aim with ascetic austerness, greatest superiority. [...] Spies proofs that the German, the European film is compatible for the world market. [...] Now it is in the hands of all those who are interested in the European film, to help the world film Spies to meet the attention it deserves." (Hans Feld, "Der deutsche Großfilm auf dem Weltmarkt. Fritz Langs Spione - ein deutscher Erfolg," in *Film-Kurier*, no. 72, March 23, 1928, my translation).

[26] See "Fritz Lang in London. Er wird in England produzieren," in *Film-Kurier*, September 26, 1927.

[27] See *Auslandsabteilung der Ufa*, September 12, 1927, Akte Langfilm, cit.

[28] See *Niederschrift Nr. 156 über die Vorstandssitzung vom 8.10.1927*, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

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Reading the Archive, Tracing Film History - *Ballet Mécanique* Coloured or Black-And-White?

> *Dear Eric,*
>
> *I am quite surprised that the 'heirs' of Léger (whoever they may be) would question the validity or integrity of your tinted print of* Ballet Mécanique. *I think that there is no question about its authenticity, and no question possible that several tinted prints came from the hands of Léger himself.*[1]

These are the first lines of a lengthy letter by experimental film historian William Moritz describing his close analysis of the various prints of the film *Ballet Mécanique* (Ferdinand Léger and Dudley Murphy, 1923). The letter dates from 1988, and was addressed to Eric De Kuyper who had just started as artistic manager of the Netherlands Film-museum (now EYE Film Institute). Léger's heirs had complained about the coloured preservation print of the film made by the Film-museum. Apparently they were of the opinion that the colours on the Dutch print were not applied by the makers of the film, but by another anonymous person who wanted to alter the film significantly. Therefore, De Kuyper turned to Moritz for an expert opinion on the authenticity of its colours, which he got.

Several pages into the letter Moritz points out that Léger's heirs were not alone in believing that the film was originally in black and white. Institutes such as MoMa, Cinémathèque française, Anthology Film Archive also were either unaware of the colours on various original prints of the film, or simply rejected their authenticity.[2] These ideas were common in a historical discourse about colour in film, which linked film art from the 1920s to black-and-white films. As a result, coloured prints, e.g. the nitrate print that was kept in the Film-museum's vaults, were considered to be fakes. Moritz's letter also attests to a change of discourse. In contrast to the heirs, Moritz was convinced the colours on *Ballet Mécanique* were authentic. This new way of looking at this film was strongly linked to new film history writing that emerged during the 1970s and 1980s. Simultaneously, there was an increase in interest in early coloured film in film historical as well as film archival circles. What makes the example of *Ballet Mécanique* so remarkable is the number of black-and-white duplicates that were made of it. The Film-museum alone possesses several black-and-white preservation prints from the past. In addition the Cinémathèque française, MoMa, Bfi and the Anthology Archive showed black-and-white prints of the film. Colour duplicates only started to appear from the beginning of the 1980s, after the aforementioned changes in film historical discourses, including the growing interest in early coloured film.[3] This points to a strong interrelationship between film archival restoration practices and film historical discourse. The question to be asked, though, is in what way these two interrelate.

To begin with, film history writing and film archival practice both function as discursive practices in a Foucaultian way.[4] In other words, they both are active practices within a broader film historical discourse, consisting of film historical utterances that were expressed within different institutions, such as film criticism, universities, and film museums. However, this more general way of interpreting the interrelationship between film archival practice and film history writing does not explain the effects on a more detailed level. Therefore, this essay contains a close reading of the variety of print duplicates – black-and-white as well as colour – of *Ballet Mécanique* existing at the Netherlands Filmmuseum.

Ballet Mécanique *and the (Dis)appearance of Colour*

In 1923 the film *Ballet Mécanique* was made by Fernand Léger and Dudley Murphy. The film was distributed in a number of film prints, several of which were tinted by Fernand Léger.[5] As a consequence various prints with tinted parts are circulating. These versions of the film alternate coloured animations of triangles and circles with experimental images of moving objects, such as kitchen devices and fairground attractions. The Netherlands Filmmuseum possesses such a coloured nitrate print, which derives from the Nederlandsche Filmliga (Dutch Filmliga). The Nederlandsche Filmliga was part of the movement of *ciné-clubs* in the 1920s. It consisted of a group of cinephiles, with an interest in non-commercial and experimental film not typically shown in regular movie theatres. The Filmliga intended to present these rarely seen films to a special audience, but since experimental films were not distributed widely in the 1920s, the Filmliga bought them directly from the filmmakers. Through this practice a small but landmark collection emerged, which later became one of the pillars of the Netherlands Filmmuseum (EYE). The Filmliga print of *Ballet Mécanique* derives from this collection.

In 1952 the Uitkijk Archief, which contained the films that were gathered by the Filmliga, and the National Historical Film Archive (NHFA) merged into the Netherlands Filmmuseum. As a consequence, the print of *Ballet Mécanique* became part of this larger collection, and in the same year, the Filmmuseum began screening its nitrate prints in the auditorium of the Stedelijk Museum twice a week.[6] In 1953 it showed *Ballet Mécanique* in a screening of assorted French avant-garde cinema. Remarkably, the Filmmuseum did not mention its colours at all.[7] In 1961 the film was shown in the auditorium of the Stedelijk Museum for the second time. It was programmed as an accompaniment to a larger exhibition on movement in art called *Bewogen Beweging* (Moving Movement). The Filmmuseum screened several films made by "real" artists who had also experimented with film, such as Man Ray, Viking Eggeling, Len Lye, and Fernand Léger. As the title suggests, the exhibition focused on the concept "movement," not leaving much room for the experiments with colour in film, which these painters were also interested in.[8] In 1968 the managing director of the Filmmuseum Jan de Vaal ordered several 35mm black-and-white duplicates of the film *Ballet Mécanique* at Cinetone Film Laboratory.[9] In addition to this, the Filmmuseum possessed various black-and-white duplicates on 16mm material. Since these prints were part of the rental collection, they were probably shown in a variety of places, reinforcing the idea that the film was black-and-white.[10] Finally, Jan de Vaal had a 16mm black-and-white duplicate made, which he sent to Ernest Lindgren in London.[11] The production and screening of these black-and-white prints of the film slowly made its colours fade from collective memory.[12]

The texts in the Filmmuseum program leaflets show a similar pattern. In 1969 *Ballet Mécanique* was literally announced as a black-and-white work of art: "Fernand Léger was one of the first cubist painters who started experimental film making because he was searching for the way to express the rhythm of normal objects in time and space."[13] The fact that the film was made by a cubist painter gave it an artistic connotation, and in emphasising the experiment with rhythm, time and space, the Filmmuseum left out the experiment with colour that the film also engages in. In the 1950s and 1960s the film historical discourse was dominated by the debate on film art, which was linked to asceticism and simplicity. As a consequence, art film was connected to black-and-white rather than colour. This connection between black-and-white and art film dated from the 1930s. During this period theoreticians such as Arnheim and Balázs started to exclude colour and sound from the aesthetics of film art.[14] They argued that the use of colour in film strongly limited the artistic possibilities of the medium. In addition, they considered colour an impediment to camera and editing techniques. Finally, colour weakened the expressiveness of light, they said.

This link between black-and-white and film art was rapidly accepted in the Netherlands. The Dutch film historical tradition originated from the aforementioned Filmliga members.[15] The Filmliga published its own journal *Filmliga*, and wrote critical and historical books about film, such as *Cinéma Militans* (Ter Braak, 1929) and *Dertig jaar film* (Jordaan, 1932).[16] Menno Ter Braak, one of the Filmliga's most important members and writers, defined what he called "absolute film" as the perfect harmonious form of this interplay between shape, movement and light.[17] As a consequence, Ter Braak's notion of *cinéma pur* excludes two major elements of film: sound and colour. He was rather strict in his opinions on film art, as were his colleagues. In comparison to the international discourse of *ciné-clubs* the Dutch Filmliga seems to have had a much more conservative perspective on film and film art. These strict ideas about the "essence" of film art would stay dominant in the broader Dutch discourse on film and film history until the early 1960, which explains the easy acceptance of the discourse on asceticism and simplicity in art film.[18] Strikingly, this entire discourse passes by the fact that colour experiments in abstract film were not unusual in the 1920s. Various artists, such as Oskar Fischinger and Walter Ruttmann experimented with moving photographs, animation, rhythm, form and colour.[19] Apparently, the discourse from the 1950s and the 1960s, which connected art film to black-and-white, erased the historical facts on 1920s avant-garde film and colour, not in the least because it was literally reproduced by the Filmmuseum's preservation practice.[20] As a consequence, the Filmmuseum ignored the colours of the film, even though it was contradictory to what the vintage print of *Ballet Mécanique* pointed out.[21]

As I mentioned in the introductory part of this essay, film archiving practice and film history writing can both be perceived as discursive practices, functional within a larger film historical discourse. However, Foucault's discourse theory does not explain the functioning of visual discourse in relation to verbal discourse. Since film archival discourse is largely visual, we need an expanded way of conceiving of these relationships. Thomas Kuhn in *On the Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962) presents a sociological analysis of "hard sciences," describing the interrelationship between optical technology and the dominant paradigm in a particular discipline at a particular place and time.[22] For example, microscopes were highly important to the investigation of neurones and the functioning of the brain around 1900, whereas fMRI dictates neurosciences today, by visualising the activity of the brain.[23]

Correspondingly, film archival practice functions as an optical technology that allows for the construction of a visual discourse on film history by collecting, restoring and showing the remains of it. In his book, Thomas Kuhn describes patterns in "hard sciences" that are similar to the ones described with regard to the colours in *Ballet Mécanique*. When using optical technologies in hard sciences, strange and unknown occurrences, better known as "anomalies," can appear. These anomalies often were not perceived, according to Kuhn, because they contradicted the fundaments of the paradigmatic ideas, the so-called "normal science."

> *[Normal science is...] research firmly based upon one or more past scientific achievements, achievements that some particular scientific community acknowledges for a time as supplying the foundation for its further practice.*[24]

These past achievements that form the foundation of normal science, are what Kuhn calls the "basic commitments" of a paradigm. I consider the historical film discourse against colour as similar to Kuhn's "normal science," and the texts written by the Filmliga and repeated by its predecessors as basic commitments. One of these basic commitments was the idea that avant-garde film from the 1920s was essentially black and white. Within this context, anomalies can appear, which do not correspond to these basic commitments. The coloured vintage print of *Ballet Mécanique* was such an anomaly that did not correspond to the basic commitments of film history and the definition of film art. As I argued, this anomaly was ignored, not taken seriously and most certainly not noticed as something special. This too is similar to what Kuhn describes in his book. Anomalies, he writes, often stay unnoticed, and as such do not have an immediate effect on normal science.[25]

However, there is a strong difference between Kuhn's observations, and what we saw in the case of *Ballet Mécanique*. Kuhn states that in order to solve the problems, or so-called "puzzles," of normal science, more and more precise optical technology will be developed. As a consequence, also more and more anomalies will appear, until at a certain point they cannot be ignored anymore. The emergence of a large number of such anomalies will eventually lead to a scientific revolution and a new paradigm.[26] However, the case of *Ballet Mécanique* shows something quite contradictory to these patterns described by Kuhn. The anomalous colours of the film *Ballet Mécanique* were actually made invisible by the production and presentation of black-and-white duplicates, keeping the vintage nitrate with all its colours in the vault. In brief, instead of making the invisible visible, archival technology made the visible invisible.

Changing Discourses - Bringing the Ballet Mécanique *Colours Back to Light*

During the 1970s the existing film historical discourse started losing its dominant position, due to the emergence of new methodologies of film history.[27] This change is usually illustrated by referring to the 1978 FIAF conference in Brighton. This conference allowed film historians and film archivists to meet, and to watch around 600 new preservations of early films that had not been screened for a long time. Seeing this material made a lot of anomalies within the discourse of dominant film history writing visible. As a consequence, a strong reaction to the dominant film historical discourse occurred. First, the new film historians considered the previous generations of historians to be imprecise and too selective in their use of historical sources. As a consequence, film archives were revisited and unknown films became subjects of investigation. Simultaneously, film archives started to turn their attention to the preservation of these films, outside of the previously established canon. Secondly, old film history was accused of being teleological, only paying attention to canonical films and describing each technological change as a novelty, bringing film art closer to perfection. As a consequence, early film was seen as a primitive and immature set of curiosities, developing into more "sophisticated" forms of cinema. Therefore, these films were often described as plain amusement or strange curiosities. Conversely, new film historians investigated each film as a document in itself. Thirdly, old film historians were said to be in constant search of the so-called "essence of film art," which resulted into a normative approach to film history. New film historians turned away from this approach, replacing it by a non-deterministic view and methodology. This entailed that each film was considered just as valuable as the other, and the word "primitive" was deleted from film historical discourse.[28] As a result, unknown and unseen films in the archives were increasingly granted a vital role in the investigation of film history.

In 1983, after these changes in film history writing had taken place, the Filmmuseum again made duplicate prints of *Ballet Mécanique*. This time the duplicates – a new 35mm negative preservation element, and 35mm and 16mm presentation prints – were made on colour film stock. These prints were the ones so fiercely disputed by Léger's heirs. From a present-day perspective, it might seem as if they neither understood film archival practice nor film history. However, with regard to the rapid changes in the 1970s, it is not surprising that the heirs stuck to the previous historical ideas about film, which had been perfectly plausible only a decade before.[29] As Thomas Kuhn explains, "Novelty emerges only with difficulty, manifested by resistance, against a background provided by expectation."[30] A change of paradigm necessarily leads to clashes. The sudden replacement of one truth by another is an aggressive event. Fernand Léger had been known as a pioneering artist, who made one of the first artistic films. Suddenly, the Filmmuseum started to show the film in colour, changing – and in a certain sense even undermining – its artistic status as seen from the classic point of view. No wonder the family protested.

However, from the new perspective on film history, showing the film in colour did not undermine its status as an artistic film at all. Following the new methods of film history, the Filmmuseum simply showed what it "discovered" in the archive; a version of the film with coloured parts. Still, the words with which the film was announced did incorporate many elements that came from the prior discourse of film history. The Filmmuseum literally repeated the description in the Filmmuseum leaflet of 1969, presenting Léger as a cubist painter from the avant-garde movement in the 1920s, and it emphasised the fact that the film showed the rhythm of objects in time and space. The description thus followed the classical tradition and discourse on film art. It was only at the end of this text that suddenly the colours were announced as an important new discovery: "Thanks to the activities of the Dutch Filmliga [...] a print that was painted by Fernand Léger himself was brought to the Netherlands. This unique print has been *discovered* and preserved by the Filmmuseum [my *italics*]."[31] The description thus consisted of two parts. The first followed the existing classical discourse on art film, and the second consisted of the revelation of the "unique" coloured print. The text literally adds the "new discovery" to the existing ones and reiterated (Filmliga) discourse on rhythm, movement, time and space. However, presenting the colours of this avant-garde film from the 1920s as something special and unique was revolutionary in itself. Instead of ignoring the colours, or dismissing them as a curiosity, they were presented as an artistic element, uplifting instead of downgrading the film. What is more, this new preservation can be considered to be a better representation of the coloured nitrate print in the vault than the ones in black and white. Therefore, it fits the new film historical discourse, even though the new print may not have revealed the existence of a formerly forgotten film. However, the new preservation did reveal the colours that were just as well hidden in the archive.

In brief, next to the preservation of more unknown non-canonical films, archives also searched for the best possible techniques to simulate the appearances of the nitrate in the most reliable ways.[32] In the case of *Ballet Mécanique*, this has resulted in more precise preservations of the film *Ballet Mécanique*. In 1998 for example, another preservation was made, which illustrates this wish for perfection in the simulation of the "original."

The preservation combined colour and black-white film stock, a somewhat cumbersome preservation technique because of the splicing involved. However, black-and-white images do not stay purely black and white when duplicated on colour film stock – they almost always take on a colour cast. Therefore, to make a high quality black-and-white preservation of the rhythmic parts studying movement, time and place, black-and-white material was needed. The coloured parts were duplicated on colour film stock. This way, the black-and-white material does justice to the avant-garde experiments in black and white, and the coloured parts now do justice to the hand-painted colour experiments of Léger. In 2010 this preservation has been repeated, only this time with the use of digital colour restoration techniques. This allowed the restorers to make an even more perfect simulation of the "original." In this respect, the new film historians seem to have influenced archival practice in its attempts to make the most precise simulation of the "original" film.

Regarding what has been said above, it can be concluded that the two film historical practices, film archiving and film history writing, influenced each other's ideas and utterances. The 1950s and 1960s discourse on the connection between film art and black-and-white not only found its way into the Filmmuseum program leaflets, but also strongly influenced the film restoration practice. As a consequence, the tinted film *Ballet Mécanique* was turned into a black-and-white film. Furthermore, the fact that the film was screened in black and white by the official film archival institutes fed the idea that any coloured version of it was a falsification. In short, visual reconstructions of film history (film archival practice) and the written accounts of it (film history writing) influence each other to the extent that they together form film historical discourse. Moreover, the parallels between this case study and Kuhn's findings on the interrelationship between optical technology and "hard sciences" encourage me to pursue the idea of the film archive as an optical technology for film history. Nevertheless, film archival and film historical practices also show important deviations from Kuhn. An explanation might be that (film) archival practices are already characterised by interpretation, description and presentation. Or as Paul Ricœur has put it in his book *Memory, History, Forgetting*: "Interpretation is indeed operating as early as the stage of the consultation of archives, and even before that, at the stage of their formation."[33] This might seem like a vicious circle, and maybe it is.

Either way, the important message is that all reconstructions of the past are of a discursive nature, be it in images or in words. Discourses that can be traced back, not only by reading old film history books and program leaflets of the institutions, but also vitally by looking at previous restoration prints that provide hidden sources of information on the history of film as encountered in the archive.

Notes

[*] I would like to thank Guy Edmondson for helping me study the various prints in the archive of the EYE Film Institute. Further I would like to thank Joshua Yumibe for his valuable advice and correction of the English language.

[1] William Moritz, *Strubbelingen rond een kopie:* Ballet Mécanique, Versus, Amsterdam 1988-89, p. 132.

[2] *Idem*, pp. 136-137.

[3] Joshua Yumibe, "On the history of color cinema since Brighton," in Luca Giuliani, David Robinson (eds.), *The Collegium Papers*, vol. IV, Le Giornate del Cinema Muto, Gemona del Friuli 2003.

[4] Michel Foucault, *L'Archéologie du savoir*, Gallimard, Paris 1969, p. 32.

[5] William Moritz, *Strubbelingen rond een kopie:* Ballet Mécanique, cit.

[6] The Stedelijk Museum is the museum of modern art in Amsterdam. Its director, Willem Sandberg, was inspired by the MoMa concept and included photography, film and design into the collection, declaring these "outsiders" to be art forms (Jansen van Galen and Schreurs, 1995).

[7] FMA - Filmmuseum program leaflets.

[8] Even though colour can also "move" of course, which probably was the reason for these painters to experiment with colour and film in the first place. Around 1958 the Filmmuseum released a 16mm catalogue. In it the film *Ballet Mécanique* was mentioned. Therefore, it is unclear which print was shown at this occasion: the coloured vintage nitrate print or a 16mm black-and-white duplicate.

[9] He ordered a black and white negative duplicate, a master, and a projection print.

[10] In fact the material is so worn out, the prints cannot be projected anymore, which suggests the popularity of the film.

[11] FMA - correspondence: Letter Jan de Vaal, Nederlands Laboratorium voor Filmtechniek, November 12, 1968.

[12] The same thing happened in other countries, such as France and the United States. See William Moritz, *Strubbelingen rond een kopie:* Ballet Mécanique, cit., p. 639.

[13] FMA - Film-museum program leaflet: October 16, 1969.

[14] Daan Hertogs, Nico de Klerk (eds.), *"Disorderly Order:" Colours in Silent Film*, Nederlands Filmmuseum, Amsterdam 1996, p. 21.

[15] Hans Schoots, *De geest maakt levend, het amerikanisme doodt*, in Nico de Klerk, Ruud Visschedijk (eds.), *Het gaat om de film! Een nieuwe geschiedenis van de Nederlandsche Filmliga 1927-1933*, Bas Lubberhuizen / Filmmuseum, Amsterdam 1999, p. 150.

[16] The latter was part of the series *Monografieën over filmkunst (Monographies on film art),* which was published in the 1930s.

[17] Absolute film is of course very close to the concept of "*cinéma pur.*" Since Ter Braak also used the latter term he probably was very familiar with the contemporary writings on film. Actually the Nederlandsche Filmliga was in the possession of an important library containing all the important international literature from the time. This collection of important books from the 1920s can still be consulted in the library of EYE film institute.

[18] Hans Schoots, *De geest maakt levend, het amerikanisme doodt*, cit., pp. 202-204.

[19] Chiel Kattenbelt, *Color and Black and White in Early Film Theory*, in *Il colore nel cinema. Fotogenia - storie e teorie del cinema*, Clueb, Bologna 1995, p. 325.

[20] Of course, the fact that colour film material was more expensive than black-and-white film played an important role in these decisions. Still, it is a matter of priorities. At present, black-and-white material is more expensive, which does not mean black-and-white films are now being preserved on colour film material.

[21] This idea may not be as strange as it seems, since film can be re-edited, parts can be cut out, and it can also be coloured by a collector or showman.

[22] Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, International Encyclopedia of Unified Science, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1962. I realize Kuhn studied "hard sciences," which form a very particular and specific case, in many ways differing from the history of film history writing. Film history has its very own dynamics. For example, many film historical books were written outside of university and are of a non-academic nature.

[23] Sarah de Rijcke, *Regarding the Brain - Practices of Objectivity in Cerebral Imaging 17th Century - Present,* Rijksuniversiteit, Groningen 2010.

[24] Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, cit., p. 10.

[25] *Idem*, p. 91.

[26] *Ibidem*.

[27] This change in discourse might be considered as something similar to what Kuhn defines as a scientific revolution.

[28] See Michèle Lagny, *De l'histoire du cinéma. Méthode historique et histoire du cinéma*, Armand Colin, Paris 1992.

[29] During the 1950s and the 1960s film was starting to get accepted as an independent art form.

[30] Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, cit., p. 64.

[31] *Filmmuseum Cinematheek Journaal*, no. 59, February 1984, p. 19.

[32] The concept of simulation was introduced by Giovanna Fossati of the EYE Film Institute. See

Giovanna Fossati, *Coloured Images Today: How to Live with Simulated Colours (and Be Happy)*, in Daan Hertogs, Nico de Klerk (eds.),*"Disorderly Order:" Colours in Silent Film*, Stichting Nederlands Filmmuseum, Amsterdam 1996, pp. 83-89.

[33] Paul Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting* (*La Mémoire, l'histoire, l'oublie*, Seuil, Paris 2000), University of Chicago Press, Chicago 2004, p. 337.

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Next to the Light. The Preservation of Music for Silent Films: a Proposal for a Contemporary Archive

The fact that silent cinema is not to be considered just as a precursor to sound cinema is today well acknowledged.[1] The studies of scholars such as Tom Gunning, André Gaudreault, Richard Abel, Noël Burch and Charles Musser are moreover an invitation to consider that which the "silent era" harbored not just as "another" cinema than the "sound" one, but as a number of "other" ways to conceive cinema, each one of them needing an accurately different approach, whatever is the chosen perspective (historiographical, aesthetic, sociologic, etc.) with which they are taken into consideration.

However, it is strange how one of these perspectives seems to be reluctant in accepting this awareness towards the silent production. It is the musical perspective: even if studies that deal with silent film music according to the specific features of the different languages of the silent films have been developed extensively (most notably, the ones by Rick Altman),[2] they nonetheless remain a minority.

Signs of this attitude are to be found even in the field of film preservation. Film archives devoted to silent films, in fact, do not often accompany their film collections with pertinent music collections. This situation apparently clashes with the need for "painstaking historical research"[3] that Altman suggests should be at the core of contemporary studies on silent films. The film music practice of the silent period was, in fact, mainly characterized by live performances of musicians during silent film screenings. As a result, every single film could have a lot of different musical interpretations, each one leading to a different audiovisual text. So, a historical research done within an archive of silent films with no references to the musical practice is likely to be incomplete. Musicians of the silent era interacted with films by staying at the side of the screen, in the shadows next to the light of the projector: it is quite ironic how the discourse on their music, now, is again confined in a "shadow" – a metaphoric one, though – which borders on the "light" of the modern studies on silent cinema, but cannot proficiently interact with it. "It is time," as Altman said, "to include sound in silent cinema's historiographical revival."[4]

My paper will summarize a part of a PhD research I developed at the University of Padova. It will outline the basic requirements of a silent film music collection. After a first part in which I will study the problem on a theoretical basis, I will briefly discuss a special collection of silent film music: the repertoire played at the international silent film festival *Le Giornate del Cinema Muto* from 1982 to present days. The accuracy shown by this festival in the presentation and distribution of silent film music practices provides, in fact, a solid ground for a project of this kind. In addition to that, *Le Giornate del Cinema Muto* have already expressed, in 2009, the intention of having such an archive developed in Pordenone.

The idea of a large-scale archive of film music has been circulating in the literature about cinema since the late 1970s. A 1977 article by Robert Fiedel, published in *American Film,* expressed a moderate confidence about the feasibility of this idea.[5]

However, the answer to the fundamental question "What should a silent film music archive preserve?" is a complex one. A silent film music archive should be at the interface between a music library and a performing arts collection. Complete and "original" scores, during the silent era, were a minority:[6] the greatest part of the musical practice was instead based on cue sheets, compilations, repertoires, or even improvisations – which cannot of course have left any trace outside occasional accounts from audience members or the performers themselves.[7] This means that the sources of these accounts – books, articles, letters, scrapbooks – should certainly be accessible through the archive. As for the cue sheets, it is known how they are essentially lists of "suggestions" for pre-existent music to be played along a certain film. These lists began to circulate from 1909,[8] thanks to the weekly magazine *Kinetogram* of the Edison Company.[9]

The subsequent growing practice of the "musical suggestion" set the premises for a rational arrangement of cue sheets into structured books, that indexed hundreds of musical pieces according to the most frequent expressive necessities of cinema. Within these books, known as "repertoires" or *Kinotheken*, a musician could rapidly find references to pieces to be used with comedy scenes, with dramatic moods, with parades or dances and so on.[10] This kind of books started to appear around 1912-1913: among the most relevant publications in this field there was the *Allgemeines Handbuch der Filmmusik* which Giuseppe Becce compiled with Hans Erdmann and Ludwig Brav.

Notwithstanding the crucial importance of repertoires and cue sheets in the history of film music and in film research (cue sheets often included information about the correct speed of projection of films),[11] their preservation would just not be enough. Alongside this material, other documents should be preserved to keep track of the film music practices referred to the period before the circulation of said cue sheets and repertoires (1908-1909). For example, it would be necessary to deal with musical documents coming from the venues that the early cinema shared with other forms of audiovisual entertainment, like the vaudeville or magic lantern shows. The somehow obscure yet extremely rich world of little theaters that hosted these spectacles would offer to the archive a relevant amount of songs and special arrangements of popular pieces. This kind of repertoire also featured in the American nickelodeon theaters, which, in a sense, inherited from vaudeville the presentation of cinema alongside other forms of entertainment. This kind of presentation usually also included hybrid sound practices, where sound effects (made with rudimentary devices or with special machines) integrated the musical performance, or where narrators and lecturers enriched and clarified the meaning of the images, and where the audience was often invited to participate in the sound routines, for example by singing a certain famous song quoted by an inter-title or by a picture slide.[12] The contemporary archivist should actually carefully consider how thin the line between music and sound effect in the early cinema actually was.[13]

Finally, a particular tradition of silent film music would bring to the archive a further collection of composite materials. Even if the historic presentation of silent films is often simplified with the model of the musician (or of the ensemble of musicians) playing live near the screen, the importance that the mechanical reproduction of sound had in the early cinema should not be forgotten.

The phonograph and the gramophone were primary protagonists of the music for silent films. So, they should receive appropriate space in the silent film music archive, through a section devoted to the preservation of records and wax cylinders. Apart from this kind of sources, attention should also be reserved to other technological devices that participated in the sound routines, such as "mechanical instruments, from *pianolas* to huge poli-instrumental carillons driven by compressed air, into which rolls of perforated paper were fitted reproducing the music scores,"[14] as Paolo Cherchi Usai summarized when recalling this peculiar type of practice. It seems appropriate to imagine collections of these perforated rolls to be part of the archive.

After having shortly recalled the variety of sources that needs to be considered, consideration should be given to an important theoretical problem. As Cherchi Usai recalls, there are two kinds of sources at the basis of cinema historiography.[15] The primary sources are the documents that are directly linked to the cinema itself. In the specific field that is being considered in this paper, they would be: cue sheets, repertoires, written scores, some recordings and materials intended to operate mechanical instruments. When considering these sources, the researcher can affirm without any doubt: "this is about music that was to be played during film screenings." However, it is immediately evident how most of these primary sources cover a very partial part of the silent era: these documents are the result of the consolidation of cinema music practices that followed the period 1907-1910. The materials preceding that moment are not unequivocally identifiable as primary or secondary sources. Drawing again on Cherchi Usai, while "a primary source provides factual information from the period under study [,] a secondary source attempts to explain the meaning of this information in relation to other facts."[16] In this sense, the whole musical practice that developed during the silent era, but that was not directly related to cinema, should be considered a secondary source for the history of silent film music. However, this "secondary" music actually entered the spaces where cinema presentations happened. The same cue sheets bear witness to a previously non-written practice where any kind of music, not just from the contemporary context but virtually from any historical period, could be legitimately used as "film music," transiting from the status of secondary source to the one of primary source. Unfortunately, the documents on the music programs played during film presentations before 1907 are very scarce. Thus, in the absence of concrete evidence on what was actually played, a theoretical paradox emerges: almost all the music ever written until the date of release of a certain silent film could be presumed to have been music for that film.

It would be rather unreasonable to expect the silent film music archive to become an universal deposit of music just because of this presumption. Instead, a more realistic approach to this problem should consider for inclusion in the archive only the "secondary" sources which are known to have a consistent and documented relationship with the early cinema.

One the one hand, attention should be given to the repertoire of the musical theater: from opera to melodrama. Film music largely relied on the opera repertoire, through the many opera reductions for piano and voice which flourished in the late 19th century. It is possible to acknowledge a trace of this routine in a late document of silent film music practice such as the *Allgemeines Handbuch der Filmmusik*: almost half of its huge musical selection comes from operas, and all the quotations suggested by the compilers are from piano arrangements.[17] As for melodrama, the system of labels that composers and arrangers used to link a certain page of music to the dramatic content of a scene ("'agits', i.e. agitatos, 'slows', [...] 'pathetics', 'struggles', 'hornpipes', 'andantes'")[18] prepared the way for similar routines that silent film musician used: "The work of the theatre musician was very much like that of the later musicians in cinemas,"[19] as David Robinson wrote.

On the other hand, attention should also be given to the music of vaudeville. When a film musician used a song or a generic piece from a vaudeville act, this choice had at least two meanings. It was of course meant to interact with the visuals of the film. But it was also an implicit hint of the bonds between the early cinema and the forms of entertainment that were once at its side. In the use of vaudeville music there was a silent restatement of a historic relationship between two arts. This did not happen when a cinema musician used music from other repertoires, as the ones pertaining to "classical" music. I would thus suggest to have musical theatre and vaudeville collections at alongside the main sections of the archive. This would also help the contemporary scholar in the difficult task of reconstructing selections from cue sheets, a process that usually requires long and painstaking research. As Gillian Anderson observed, even in the silent era "if a musician did not have a piece cited by the cue sheet, a substitution had to be made. An enormous library of incidental music was required."[20] However, the archive would require even more. It must be remembered that in the contemporary age, especially since the Thames Television presentation of Abel Gance's *Napoléon*, reconstructed by Kevin Brownlow[21] and screened with new music by Carl Davis at the 1980 London Film Festival,[22] the repertoire of the music for the silent films started to grow again. In the last 30 years, the venues where silent film are screened in a way that strives to be faithful to historical practices multiplied, as well as the production of appropriate music accompaniments founded on complete scores, but also, again, on cue sheets and improvisations, as was the case during the actual silent age. It seems reasonable for this "new" tradition of music for silent films to be preserved alongside the historical documents, which are its origin and source of inspiration. The materials connected to this new era of screenings of silent films are partly different from the ones recalled before: for example, they often include recordings and videos, stored on modern digital medias like CDs, DVDs or computer files. The management of digital documents is something a contemporary archive cannot overlook, and that can lead to a meaningful optimization of the preservation routines. Moreover, it could also facilitate the constitution of the archive itself. As Martin Marks observed in 1997:

> *Given the costs of acquiring, cataloguing and maintaining such collections, for many years to come the only feasible approach may be to strive for a "web" archive: a cooperative network of studios and institutions [...]. The idea may seem far-fetched, but it is not inconceivable, given the loose bonds which already link the American Film Institute to the Library of Congress, and the world's archives into an International Federation.*[23]

Before this step, a physical place where to start the work is however needed. And in this regard, one of the most opportune places seems to be *Le Giornate del Cinema Muto* in Pordenone.

Since 1982, *Le Giornate del Cinema Muto* has been one of the key locations in the geography of the modern "renaissance" of the silent films, and one of the places where the preservation of films has concretely become an incentive for the creation or reconstruction of musical illustrations. After a few editions, the Festival managed to sustain the production of new music for silent films, with a meaningful starting point in the 1985 screening of *Consuelita* (Roberto Roberti, 1925), accompanied by a score for two pianos by Ennio Morricone. Almost at the same time, *Le Giornate del Cinema Muto* began to host new performances of outstanding reconstructions of music for silent films, or of new scores. This path started on October 6, 1984, with the presentation of Berndt Heller's reconstruction of Hans Erdmann's music for *Nosferatu*, and has today resulted in Carl Davis' score for *Wings* (William A. Wellman, 1927), which debuted at the 1993 London Film Festival[24] and was brought to Pordenone in 2010.

Since 2003, this production of musical events has been accompanied by a commitment in the education of new musicians for the silent films. 2003 was in fact the first year of the SMI (School of Music and Image), which is today known as Pordenone Master classes. Because of that, even if the musicians that contribute to the Festival are not resident accompanists, they are defining with their annual teachings and performances a real "school" with an inner consistency. The presence of an archive alongside this "school," where to store the results of the researches and of the creativity of teachers and pupils, together with sources and documents from the silent era, seems to be necessary not only for educational purposes, but also to help in defining the identity of this "school," by creating a historical record of its activities.

Le Giornate del Cinema Muto, as anticipated before, has already shown a positive disposition in this sense. In 2009, a suggestion I made during the *XI Collegium* led to an official press release that announced the future constitution of a silent film music archive in Pordenone.[25]

After the announcement, the University of Padova expressed the intention to participate in this project. It has been ascertained that the University Multimedia and E-Learning Center would be able to cooperate in the tasks of digital processing and management of the archive. The combined support of both the University of Padova and *Le Giornate del Cinema Muto* for this project could also encourage communication with other institutions whose cooperation in this venture would be crucial.

However, before researching that stage, it is of course necessary to imagine how to deal with the work of acquisition of the archival material. For this reason, a PhD research I was already developing about the history and aesthetics of music for silent films was integrated with a study of the musical scores played at *Le Giornate del Cinema Muto*. The purpose of this choice was to identify a collection of documents, which is small and homogeneous, being restricted only to written music and ignoring (for the moment) sources with different characteristics, such as cue sheets or recordings of improvisations. The research produced a commented catalogue of 115 film presentations, covering all written music played at *Le Giornate del Cinema Muto*. This catalogue is intended as a guide to the operations of acquisition: it points out which the single documents that needs to be indexed or preserved are while trying to define the overall artistic traits of the Pordenone "school." The research was conducted by studying the audio-video recordings of the performances at *Le Giornate del Cinema Muto* stored by the Cineteca del Friuli in Gemona. Further information was acquired by consulting the Festival catalogues and the database hosted by the Festival website. The frame of the research was completed by direct dialogue with the composers and musicians themselves, such as Neil Brand, Günter A. Buchwald, Donald Sosin, Maud Nelissen, John Sweeney, Phil Carli, Berndt Heller, Gabriel Thibaudeau and Antonio Coppola.

Even if reduced to such an essential core of 115 scores, the archive of music for silent films would yield a few immediate benefits. First of all, from the point of view of research, it will provide an organized and easily accessible collection of documents otherwise subjected to the most common condition of the silent film music materials: "[…] Scattered in private collections, libraries, and film studios, often un-catalogued,"[26] as Marks observed. The single scores might be examined in their individuality, to analyze the way in which a composer interpreted the visual language of a certain silent film. But added to that, there would be room for comparative studies, as many of the scores written for Pordenone replaced previous musical works that were composed during the "original" silent period.

It is also possible to consider the positive impact of such a collection on film preservation studies. In fact, the catalogue of *Le Giornate* includes reconstructions of historic musical illustrations whose final shape in turn helped reconstruct the films they are referring to. These scores are thus documents which are indispensable in order to study certain past restorations For example, Gillian Anderson's version of William Frederick Peters and Louis Silvers' illustration for *Way Down East* (David W. Griffith, 1920), presented in Pordenone in 1988, was a pivotal guide in the reconstruction of the film itself, directed by Peter Williamson of the Museum of Modern Art.[27]

Finally, this collection would become an advantage for the musicians. The scores could be used as references for education and personal study, to be aware of past achievements in order to consciously build on them, or even to consciously deviate from them: an option which is perfectly legitimate, but that today cannot be always chosen because of the known difficulties in the circulation and the availability of silent film music. Moreover, in light of fact that since the musical production specific to *Le Giornate* would become identifiable and accessible, it would become easier to gradually recognize it as a coherent whole: a kind of repertoire. The availability of the music produced in Pordenone, starting from an organized collection of scores, would make much easier the task of critics and scholars who would want to describe the features and the development of this budding "school."

As a consequence, while helping to build a kind of "self-awareness" for the Pordenone school, the archive could simultaneously become a good premise for a more careful consideration of silent film music (and of film music in general).

On that final point, it is clear how the music that this project is going to preserve exists *because* of cinema; at the same time, however, there is an amount of this music that actually exists *because* of cinema and *Le Giornate del Cinema Muto*. Via the hopeful foundation of an archive of music for silent film, the Festival will be able to reconstruct its own musical history whilst simultaneously providing "training" in film music preservation. After this first step, it will become less daunting to try to apply the acquired knowledge to an expanded repertoire, and going beyond the boundaries of the Festival itself. From all that I have learned about the Festival, it seems natural for Pordenone to become the place where to start an enterprise of this kind. It deserves to confirm, once more, that a place for cinema cannot be complete without a place for music, with the hope that this will help in dispelling all the metaphorical "shadows" that still lurk on silent film music, and that in the end only one shadow will remain: the one cast by the flickering light of the cinema screen.

Notes

[1] Tom Gunning called this kind of evolutionary perspective "the continuity model." "This model sees early cinema as a preparatory period for later film styles and practices, the infancy of an art form […] Following a biological and teleological logic, this assumes that the later styles of cinema are a sort of natural norm that early cinema envisioned but was not yet capable of realizing because of technological and economic immaturity and a natural need for a period of development guided by a method of trial and error." Tom Gunning, *"Now You See It, Now You Don't:" The Temporality of the Cinema of Attractions*, in Richard Abel (ed.), *Silent Film*, Athlone Press, London 1996, pp. 71-72.

[2] Rick Altman, *Silent Film Sound*, Columbia University Press, New York-Chichester 2004.

[3] Rick Altman, *Silent Film Sound*, cit., p. 9.

[4] *Ibidem*.

[5] "The most difficult obstacle to overcome is funding […] [which] is especially frustrating considering how inexpensive the actual work would be compared to the costs of motion picture preservation. […] Now that both the art and peril of our film music heritage are recognized, the dollars won't be far behind." Robert Fiedel, "Saving the Score. Wanted: a National Film Music Archive," in *American Film*, vol. 3, October 1977, p. 71.

[6] "Original" film scores for silent films started to be created around 1907-1908, more than a decade after the conventional date of birth of cinema. Moreover, the "original" scores were usually played for film presentations in great European or American cities, while the smaller centers kept using more practical (and less expensive) forms of musical compilation or improvisation. See Rick Altman, *Silent Film Sound*, cit., pp. 251-252; and also Ennio Simeon, *Per un pugno di note. Storia, teoria, estetica della musica per il cinema, la televisione e il video*, Rugginenti, Milano 1995, p. 117.

[7] It is however necessary to remark, as Sergio Miceli does, that the "improvisation" for silent films was just a matter of recalling pieces from a personal repertoire, with a few changes in order to adapt them

to different film scenes. See Sergio Miceli, *Musica per film. Storia, Estetica, Analisi, Tipologie*, Ricordi, Milano 2009, p. 40.

[8] Charles Hoffman, *Sounds for Silents*, Drama Book Specialists, New York 1970 [paragraph *Moods of music... The Cue Sheet*, no page number].

[9] Roberto Calabretto, *Lo schermo sonoro. La musica per film*, Marsilio, Venezia 2010, p. 18.

[10] See the index of Ernö Rapée, *Motion Picture Moods for Pianists and Organists*, Schirmer, New York 1924, pp. iv-xii.

[11] Kevin Brownlow, "Silent Films: What Was the Right Speed?," in *Sight and Sound*, summer 1980, pp. 164-167.

[12] Rick Altman, *Silent Film Sound*, cit., in particular *Color Plates* between p. 182 and p. 183; also Stephen Bottomore, *The Story of Percy Peashaker: Debates about Sound Effects in the Early Cinema*, in Richard Abel, Rick Altman (eds.), *The Sounds of Early Cinema*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington 2001, pp. 129-142.

[13] Rick Altman, *The Living Nickelodeon*, in Richard Abel, Rick Altman, *The Sounds of Early Cinema*, cit., p. 237.,

[14] Paolo Cherchi Usai, *Silent Cinema. An Introduction*, Palgrave Macmillan, London 2000, p. 8.

[15] Paolo Cherchi Usai, *Silent Cinema. An Introduction*, cit., pp. 92-98.

[16] *Idem*, p. 96.

[17] Here are, for example, the references that the *Allgemeines Handbuch der Filmmmusik* gives about the operas by Giacomo Puccini:

1. *Gianni Schicchi*, Fantasia Tavan (Ricordi);
2. *La Fanciulla del West*, Fantasia Gauwin (Ricordi);
3. *La Fanciulla del West*, Fantasia Tavan (Ricordi);
4. *Manon Lescaut*, Fantasia Luporini (Ricordi);
5. *Manon Lescaut*, Fantasia Tavan (Ricordi);
6. *Manon Lescaut*, Minuetto dell'atto II dalla Fantasia Tavan (Ricordi);
7. *Suor Angelica*, Fantasia Tavan (Ricordi);
8. *Il Tabarro*, Fantasia Tavan (Ricordi);
9. *Le Villi*, Fantasia Tavan (Ricordi).

The piano arrangements quoted by the authors are *fantasias*: solo piano assemblages of memorable musical moments from the operas. Hans Erdmann, Giuseppe Becce, Ludwig Brav, *Allgemeines Handbuch der Filmmusik*, 2 voll., Schlesinger'sche Buchhandlung, Berlin 1927.

[18] James M. Glover, quoted in David Robinson, *Music of the Shadows*, Le Giornate del Cinema Muto, Pordenone 1990, p. 67.

[19] David Robinson, *Music of the Shadows*, cit., p. 67.

[20] Gillian B. Anderson, *Music for Silent Films 1894-1929. A Guide*, Library of Congress, Washington 1988, p. xxxi.

[21] Kevin Brownlow, "Abel Gance's Napoléon Returns from Exile," in *American Film*, vol. 6, January - February 1981, pp. 28-32, 68, 70-73.

[22] Carl Davis in Neil Brand, *Dramatic Notes. Foregrounding Music in the Dramatic Experience*, University of Luton Press, Luton 1998, p. 93.

[23] Martin M. Marks, *Music and the Silent Film. Contexts and Case Studies 1895-1924*, Oxford University Press, New York-Oxford 1997, pp. 7-8.

[24] Carl Davis, *The Silents*, booklet of the Silva Screen Records CD *The Silent* issued in 2000, p. 8.

[25] On October 10, 2009, the following press release appeared at the web address http://www.cinetecadelfriuli.org/gcm/giornate/comunicati/comunicati_2009.html#10ottobre2009_27 "*L'edizione 2009 delle* Giornate del Cinema Muto *sarà ricordata anche per la nascita di un importante progetto, quello della creazione di un archivio della musica per il cinema muto. È un'iniziativa senza precedenti, volta alla creazione di un repertorio contenente tutti i dati delle partiture create negli ultimi decenni per il festival e in altre manifestazioni analoghe. L'archivio si propone inoltre di raccogliere, catalogare e rendere disponibili i documenti storici relativi alla musica per il cinema realizzati anche all'epoca del muto.*
L'idea è emersa nel corso del Collegium, che riunisce studenti e ricercatori da tutto il mondo, grazie a uno dei suoi partecipanti, Marco Bellano, dottorando all'Università di Padova, diplomato in pianoforte e studente di composizione al Conservatorio di Vicenza, nonché autore del libro Metapartiture - Comporre musica per i film muti *(Cinit, 2007), breve studio sulle potenzialità dello scrivere oggi musica per il cinema muto e che, per uno stesso film, mette a confronto le nuove composizioni con le vecchie partiture.*
Paolo Cherchi Usai, del direttivo del festival, ha commentato: 'l'Archivio della musica per il cinema muto è un progetto che riflette e ben rappresenta l'impegno pluridecennale delle Giornate del Cinema Muto *nella valorizzazione della componente sonora del cinema dei primi decenni e si annuncia come una preziosa opportunità di stimolare la creazione di nuove idee e nuovi talenti musicali in Italia e all'estero'.*"

[26] Martin M. Marks, *Music and the Silent Film. Contexts and Case Studies 1895-1924*, cit., p. 7.

[27] Gillian B. Anderson, *Lillian on the Rocks. D. W. Griffith's* Way Down East *in Italy*, in *Performing Arts at the Library of Congress*, Library of Congress, Washington 1992, pp. 86-107.

Jan Holmberg, Ingmar Bergman Foundation, Stockholm

Archive Matters. Ingmar Bergman and the Film Archive of the Future

> *[…] writing is the supplement* par excellence *since it marks the point where the supplement proposes itself as the supplement of the supplement […]*
> Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 1967
>
> *If it be that you will know the language of this god. If it be that you can speak to this god. If it be so: then pray for us.*
> Ingmar Bergman, *Cries and Whispers*, 1973

16 April 1970, Ingmar Bergman embarked on a new script with the following words:

> *It's finally, finally spring, and finally, finally, finally it's light and one can live again. So it's all set. Let's start then. Oh, well! Here we go. ANNA. That's a good name, I've used it lots of times before, admittedly, but it's so good […].*[1]

As the example demonstrates, beginnings are always tricky, and not only for novelists or screenwriters. Where to begin – and with what? And indeed: where does the beginning begin? Historians would be wise to dodge questions of origin, as they remain theoretically impossible to corroborate, but empirically feasible to falsify: no, look here, this actually took place before that.

As beginnings are an important aspect of the following, I will begin this article by quoting a passage, which – incidentally – is *from* a beginning and *about* beginnings:

> *Let us not begin at the beginning, nor even at the archive. But rather at the word "archive" – and with the archive of so familiar a word.* Arkhe *we recall, names at once the commencement and the commandment.*[2]

The archive, then, consists of two principles in one, Derrida continues: on the one hand the historical principle of origin or commencement; on the other the legal principle of authority or commandment. But typically, at least, nothing ever *begins* in the archive. On the contrary: the *tempus* of the archive, seemingly, is always that of afterwards, *post festum*. An event takes place, leads a more or less short life in a more or less public eye, and only then is it deposited, filed, registered and put away in a storage room somewhere far from the glare of publicity. The etymology of the word notwithstanding, then, the typical archive is less the origin of anything than it is the dustbin for bureaucratic or artistic debris.

If we think of the specific case of film archiving (and continue the analysis of grammatical *tempi*), think of the

FIAF mantra – "first preserve, then show." The idea is simple and obvious enough: be careful with original material. However and as always, the notion of a virginal "first" is nothing but wishful thinking. The holdings of the archive are at the mercy of the rights-holders, who normally would want a turnaround of their investment before it is discarded, (i.e., archived). And turnaround in the case of film means damaged goods. The dream of us archivists, to receive our objects in mint condition, is almost always just that: an empty vision, as sadly illustrated by the following example: an archival record of a 35mm print of Steven Spielberg's *The Sugarland Express* (1974), deposited by the distributor in the cinematheque of the Swedish Film Institute, the 8th of November, 1978. In the left column of the paper file, we can see the whereabouts of the print, including, for instance, a few loans to Scandinavian colleagues such as the Danish Film Museum and the Norwegian Film Institute.

The middle column indicates the physical quality of the six reels of the film, using the standard FIAF scale of the day from 1, being good, to 4, being unscreenable. The right column shows the dates when the print has been inspected, together with the comments of the inspectors. When the film was deposited, all reels were considered to be worth the mark 2, that is, fair though not pristine. Twenty-odd years later, the last comment, written in capitals as in great affect, reads "*sönderkörd*," or "screened to trash."

The life of this print, then, as that of many others, is not unlike Thomas Hobbes' famous description of the state of nature in *Leviathan* (1651), which is "nasty, brutish and short." So it happened, that the archival record survived the archival object; the reference its referent. The fragile paper material of the file still proved more endurable than the valuable film, in spite of the fact that the latter was made for eternity whereas the former was just a simple note.

In her fascinating study on the legal file as media technology, Cornelia Vismann states that while the English language separates the materiality of archival holdings (*file*) from their function (*record*), her own language makes no distinction:

> *The German term* Akten, *on the other hand, does not differentiate between readable corpora of texts and space-consuming convolutes of paper. From a media-technological perspective, this homonym, despite its terminological indifference to matter and function, is quite precise:* Akten *(records) generate* Akten *(files).*[3]

Historically, more often than not, the materials of the file and its record have been more or less the same: ink on paper. There have been exceptions of course, such as the film archive, where the holdings are typically comprised of various plastics, coated with thin layers of gelatine. To find a specific *specimen* of these holdings, however, one still had to consult letters in ink on notes of paper.

But all this is changing. The kind of filing system I just described is not in use anymore: protocols for the registration, cataloguing and inspection of the holdings of film archives are, of course, made on computers nowadays. Which is clearly more efficient in many ways, but new questions of preservation are raised. We can mourn the fact that an archival file survived its corresponding film print, but still appreciate that at least the file remains and with it the information that the print existed at all. When ink on paper is being replaced by data, however, the increased accessibility of the archive is obtained at the expense of its preservation: compared to digital information, even fragile paper notes prove endurable.

In 1975, the NASA space probe *Viking* landed on Mars, did what it should and sent its data to a lab in California, where it was registered on magnetic data tape, analysed and stored under the best possible circumstances, that is cool and dry. There, the tapes sat until 1999, when neuro biologist Joseph Miller wanted to analyse the material. The NASA archivists retrieved it, but realised nobody knew how to read it anymore, since the access code was obsolete and the responsible programmers had either died or retired. In less than twenty-five years, then, the material was still there but yet lost. Luckily, Dr. Miller eventually could access at least a third of the information, but only because a number of references and codes more or less by mistake had been saved on… paper.[4]

Film, however, is not made of paper but of something far more fragile: plastics and gelatine. But does it have to be? What is the definition of a film archive? Could it instead be comprised of something more endurable?

Before Ingmar Bergman donated his private archive to the Ingmar Bergman Foundation in 2002, his notion of himself as archivist seemed somewhat dismissive. In an interview in the early seventies, Bergman was asked if he took any interest in everything written about him, to which he replies: "I never read very carefully what's written about me. All that is *vanitas vanitatum* or whatever it's called. It's as if it concerned someone else, some distant cousin or relative but not myself."[5] Similarly, when he was asked whether he had kept any of his work material, he claimed that he never saved anything: either he had thrown it away, or perhaps someone else has taken care of it.

Yeah, right. Not only did he keep much of his stuff, he kept virtually everything – and how! But for whatever reason, Bergman maintained the position that he was an anti-archivist, paying no interest whatsoever in posterity. As he puts it in a television interview:

> *I am hundred percent clear about that I'm producing utility goods, both for cinema and the stage. And if they survive me, or don't survive me, or what people say about them, doesn't bother me in the least. And I'm being absolutely honest, too.*[6]

As we all know, whenever a person is claiming to be honest, he probably isn't. Certainly not Bergman, in this case. Because his claim not to care about the afterlife of his work is contradicted by the very fact that his archive, when it was handed over to the Ingmar Bergman Foundation, was remarkably well-kept. Manuscripts (filmed or un-filmed, published and unpublished), drafts, letters, notes covering almost his entire career have been accumulated and saved for posterity. Typically, he would for any of his films keep everything from the very first draft over handwritten scripts in various stages to the typewritten screenplay and onto the shooting script.

Of his correspondence, we have catalogued some 5,000 letters; which means we have got through a little more than half of it. And not only did he keep mail addressed to him, but more often than not also copies of his own letters to others. Didn't keep anything, eh? If anyone is not convinced that Bergman in fact not only collected stuff, but did it with such a passion that it bordered to an aspect of *mal d'archive* (of which a known symptom is the fantasy of being able to save everything), we also have objects like, for instance, a note to the house-owners on the street where Bergman lived in the early 1960s on how they would be charged for the snow shovelling of the winter 1961-62, or his menu of 2007 written by his housekeeper including meals such as cod with egg sauce, meat balls, etc.

In short, then, with a few exceptions (some thousand photograph prints, a few reels of motion picture film and a number of awards and the like), the Ingmar Bergman Archive is almost entirely comprised of paper materials. What, then, is a film archive? Well, clearly, a piece of paper is not a film. But what is? In the long run, film won't last. Even under the best possible conditions (including those of never being screened), a film print will have a life-span of a hundred years or so. Nitrate possibly shorter, acetate yet even shorter and polyester – hopefully but who knows? – a little longer. Take the organic composition of the emulsion into the equation, and the prognosis is even worse.[7] A paper note, by contrast, might last for millennia.

Consider the example of another art form. *The Goldberg Variations* can be performed on the piano Johann Sebastian Bach never had. Instruments may have changed; his music has remained three hundred years later. But the reason for this is not some metaphysics of the immortality of masterpieces, but simply because Bach's music exists on the comparably safe storage medium of paper, traceable back to Anna Magdalena's note book.

What, then, is music – fugitive configurations of sound waves, or less ephemeral notes on paper? To Bergman, often referring to his scripts as "film stories," a film is something *written*. And time may prove him right.

To me, one of the most suggestive objects in the Ingmar Bergman Archive is a never opened package of notebooks. When the neurotic Bergman had got accustomed to writing on a specific kind of yellow paper, he bought a whole supply of it to make sure he would never run out. And so now they form part of our collection (although we haven't bothered to catalogue them yet, certainly not to digitise them). These quite literal unwritten pages, then, represent Bergman's true masterpiece: the one that never made it even onto paper, into writing.

When the last reel of photographic film has been manufactured, when the last analogue projector is on display in a technical museum somewhere and when the last movie theatre has turned into a transmitter of broadcast opera performances, the remains of cinema might very well be humble pieces of paper. With any luck, there will be readable letters on them, but – who knows? – blank pages may be as close as future generations will get to what film really was.

Notes

[1] Ingmar Bergman, *Arbetsbok*, no. 26, 1970. Unpublished note book on record in the Ingmar Bergman Archives, file number F:119 (my translation).

[2] Jacques Derrida, "Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression," in *Diacritics*, vol. 25, no. 2, Summer 1995, p. 9.

[3] Cornelia Vismann, *Files: Law and Media Technology*, transl. Geoffrey Winthrop-Young, Stanford University Press, Stanford 2008, p. xii.

[4] David Kushner, "One Giant Screw-Up for Mankind," in *Wired*, no. 15, January 2007, http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/15.01/nasa.html, last access January 2012.

[5] Birgitta Steene, "Words and Whisperings: An Interview with Ingmar Bergman," in Birgitta Steene (ed.), *Focus on the Seventh Seal*, Englewood Cliffs, Prentice-Hall, New York 1972, p. 42.

[6] Television interview quoted in Stig Björkman's documentary ... *But Film is My Mistress* (Sweden, 2010) (my translation).

[7] The best account of this sad state of affairs is of course Paolo Cherchi Usai, *The Death of Cinema: History, Cultural Memory and the Digital Dark Age*, BFI Publishing, London 2001.

Luigi Virgolin, Cineteca di Bologna

Comme interroger une collection de films des origines. L'Exemple de la section *Cento anni fa* au festival *Il Cinema Ritrovato* de Bologne

Introduction

Le point de départ de cette intervention tourne autour à comme on interroge une collection de cinéma muet pour un Festival. Quels sont les buts ? Quelles pratiques méthodologiques se déploient ? Le champ d'analyse est offert par le festival *Il Cinema Ritrovato* de Bologne. En particulier, on s'intéresse à l'exemple de la section *Cento anni fa*, dirigée par Marianne Lewinsky, qui conduit chaque année depuis 2004 une exploration de la production internationale du cinéma des origines, dit autrement propose une histoire du cinéma à travers les films. Ceci n'est pas un bilan ni une étude analytique d'un projet qui est beaucoup plus complexe et touche différents aspects liés à la recherche cinématographique. C'est plus simplement un coup d'œil sur le travail conduit dans les archives pour isoler quelques échantillons et pour mieux y comprendre le lien entre la pratique et les questions théoriques.

Une pratique qui concerne le rapport entre le sujet chercheur et l'archive. Un rapport réciproque, où se confrontent les instances du chercheur et l'identité de l'archive. Le sujet projette sa propre recherche sur la chair vivante de la collection, et il opère une sélection. Par contre, l'archive possède sa physionomie bien déterminée qui conditionne les choix du sujet.

Un archive de images en mouvement connait plusieurs manières d'existence à la fois. Du coté virtuel, il est un dépôt illimité de mémoire et d'imaginaire inséré dans le réseau des archives filmiques. Sur le plan de l'actualisation, la physionomie de l'archive dépends des films qui le composent, des leurs conditions physiques, et donc du seuil de leur accessibilité. Finalement, au niveau de la réalisation, c'est-à-dire du potentiel traduit en réalité, l'archive est par métonymie cette petite part – le film, un programme, un palimpseste – qui est montrée au public. Tout niveau représente d'une manière différente un lieu où si constituent les conditions, les opportunités, les choix et les façons de présentation de l'archive. Voyons donc quelques exemples.

Présence et absence du film

Dans un programme historique, qui correspond à une session bien identifié du passé, l'enjeu principal est l'existence même du film, sa survivance jusqu'à nous. C'est le cas de *Cent'anni fa a Bologna*,[1] un programme composé par des titres qui ont été réellement projetés en 1907 dans les cinémas de Bologne pendant les mêmes jours du Festival, du 30 juin au 7 juillet, avec un décalage de cent ans. Il s'agissait là d'étudier le fait cinématographique dans des conditions moins connus, un particulier le développement de l'industrie cinématographique italienne, en 1907 presque au début, dans un lieu géographique pas centrale mais plutôt périphérique tel que la ville de Bologne. Le fonctionnement des salles de la ville, la distribution et l'exploitation des films, la dimension du marché cinématographique national et international tant que la réception du public se retrouvent ainsi au creusement d'une étude plus large et stratifié grâce à la recomposition du spectacle cinématographique, constitué de titres et de productions bien précis qui peuvent être repérés ponctuellement sur les magazines et la presse de l'époque.

Un exemple pareil c'est le programme présenté par Giovanni Lasi et dédié au Concours cinématographique de Milan de 1909.[2] Grâce au comité promotor composé par les personnalités les plus importants de la vie culturelle et politique de la ville, le 17 octobre 1909 est inauguré le premier Concours Mondial de Cinématographie, auquel participent toutes les principales maisons de productions italiennes et un certain nombre des sociétés étrangères, avec un total de 70 films présentés. Montrer les films survécus qui ont participé et gagné quelque prix au Concours, permet de comprendre l'importance de cet énorme événement au niveau international et le rôle décisif joué par l'Italie à l'écran, désormais prête à conquérir dans quelques années les marchés du monde entier.

Structure du programme et position du film

Le programme cinématographique composé par plusieurs films est l'unité de base de cette époque du cinéma, pas le film individuel. D'ailleurs, ça suffit suivre la terminologie du temps, qui appelle le film une *scène*, et le genre une *série de production*. Une session qui veut être le plus représentatif de la cinématographie nationale à un moment donné sait que la structure générale du programme est plus importante du film seul. Ainsi un programme des premiers temps peut s'articuler dans la diversité d'une scène en plein air, une scène art et industrie, une scène dramatique, une scène historique, une scène comique, etc. Tout ça mène à deux conséquences. Au niveau du paradigme, un titre garde une valeur métonymique, il est là à la place de tous les titres du même genre, ou mieux, de la même série de production. *Cretinetti re dei ladri* (Itala Film, 1909)[3] évidemment figures à la place de tous les comiques en série interprétés par André Deed, qui en 1909 connaissent en Italie leur premier grand succès. Au niveau syntagmatique, le sens d'un titre dépends aussi du film qui viens avant et du film qui vient après. La position n'est pas neutre, ce n'est pas par hasard que la comique *Cretinetti re dei ladri* termine le spectacle, comme l'était l'habitude de l'époque.

Jacques Rancière, à propos de la dimension visuelle, parle de trois forces de l'image, en empruntant à Roland Barthes.[4] La force de la singularité de l'image obtuse (*punctum*), la valeur d'enseignement du document qui garde la trace d'une histoire (*studium*) et la capacité combinatoire du signe apte à s'associer à n'importe quel élément d'une série pour donner vie à l'infini à nouvelles phrases-images. C'est dedans les contraints du palimpseste que l'ouverture combinatoire, dont Rancière parle, prend la forme du programme cinématographique tel qu'on le connaît.

Esthétique vs fonctionnalité

Si on a la chance pas seulement que le film soit survécu, mais qu'en existe différents versions avec le même sujet, le souci est celui de choisir le mieux, et ça peut impliquer le côté esthétique plutôt que le côté fonctionnel, comme dans le programme dédié au tremblement de terre de Messine de fin décembre 1908.[5] En ce cas là, au coeur des réflexions ils y étaient les conditions mêmes de représentation d'une catastrophe, c'est-à-dire la visibilité de l'événement : qu'est-ce qu'on voit réellement ?

La tragédie de Messine et Reggio Calabria eut un écho énorme, tous les médias accourent, soit la presse, soit la radio, soit les principales manufactures cinématographiques italiennes et étrangères. L'étude était focalisé sur le corpus filmique, en particulier sur l'organisation du matériel selon des principes thématiques, l'aspect descriptif ou narratif du récit, les coordonnées spatiales, la valeur informative des intertitres, les liens entre les vues cinématographiques et les autres media.

Les actualités sur le tremblement mènent avec force le spectateur au milieu d'un chaos cognitif, où il y a plus la normale circulation du sens. On est dedans un brouillard sémantique, le soi-disant « *fog of war* », qui trouve un équivalent visuel dans la fumée en beaucoup des scènes. Parmi les titres à disposition, aux deux pôles opposés il y a d'un côté *Tremblement de terre de Messine* (Pathé, 1909), une copie de 135 mètres avec intertitres français conservée aux Archives françaises du film du CNC, et de l'autre côté *Tremblement de terre à Messine* (Pathé, 1909), une copie de 40 mètres sans intertitres conservée aux Gaumont Pathé Archives.

La première, plus longe et articulée, résulte sans doute plus lisible et compréhensible de la seconde, qui au contraire est moins claire et presque sans références, et donc tout à fait plus cohérente et utile au discours théorique. Le premier est un film à voir dans une session cinématographique du Festival, le second vaut mieux en tant que appui visuel dans une exposition scientifique.

Subjectivité et point de vue

Il y a des exemples où les différentes versions filmiques du même événement peuvent coexister ensemble, parce que chacune a ses propres caractéristiques liées soit à la forme soit au contenu. Le regard incorporé dans les non fiction films n'est pas neutre mais il est porteur d'une subjectivité et d'un point de vue à dévoiler.

Les célébrations officielles avec les souverains et les autorités sont un sujet assez fréquent dans le cinéma des origines, et parmi ceux-là il faut considérer le lancement du cuirassé « *Roma* » à La Spezia, en juin 1907, à la présence des souverains d'Italie.[6] Dans le programme dédié au cinéma italien de 1907 on a vu une production non identifiée, probablement italienne, avec le titre anglais *Launch of the Battleship « Roma » by the King of Italy* (1907), une copie de 80 mètres conservée au British Film Institut. Il s'agit là d'une représentation officielle, attestée par la proximité de l'opérateur aux protagonistes de l'événement, l'axe central des cadres, le récit linéaire qui se déroule d'abord dans le défilé du Roi, la Reine, les hauts officiels de l'armé, l'archevêque et les représentants de l'ordre religieux, après la passerelle juste à côté du navire et finalement le moment clou du baptême et l'entrée du navire à la mer. C'est une version très similaire à celle de Filoteo Alberini produite par Cines et inséré dans le programme historique *Cent'anni fa a Bologna* dont on a déjà parlé.

D'ailleurs, la maison romaine Cines était très proche au pouvoir politique et économique de la capitale, cela explique les conditions optimales dans lesquelles l'opérateur pouvait filmer, conditions qu'on retrouve dans cette version.

Dans le même programme on a vu aussi *Il varo della corazzata « Roma »* (1907), un film apparemment réalisé par Giovanni Vitrotti pour Ambrosio. Il s'agit là du contrechamp de la version officielle précédente, un regard documentaire plus périphérique, détaché du moment de circonstance mais plutôt intéressé aux gens et aux travaux du port, où l'opérateur se balade presque sans destination. Ça sont évidemment deux expressions de deux points de vue et de rapports déséquilibrés au niveau politique et économique, finalement deux modalités de filmer le même événement.

Autour du film : l'extra filmique

Ce n'est pas seulement le film en lui qui admet la projection, ça sont aussi les documents et les matériaux extra filmiques qui peuvent déterminer la programmation et définir ses modalités. Le film *Sul tetto del mondo* (1909-1910) de Vittorio Sella est le résultat filmique de l'expédition conduite par le Prince Luigi Amedeo de Savoie, Duca degli Abruzzi, entre mars et août 1909 dans les régions du Pakistan e Inde.[7] L'objectif raté était le sommet du K2, l'expédient de toute façon sera le record du monde en altitude de l'époque de 7654 mètres. À l'occasion de la première projection de gala, le 16 février 1910 au Théâtre Vittorio Emanuele de Turin, le Prince lui-même donne une conférence du voyage, au titre *Voyage d'exploration aux montagnes du Karakoram*, publiée en suite par la section de Turin du Club Alpino Italiano. Avec cet exposé il commente la projection du film en donnant des informations sur l'itinéraire, des descriptions des lieux et des gens, etc. Les projections successives seront accompagnés par de conférences scientifiques qui comment l'entreprise et les images qui en sont le témoignage. D'une manière similaire, la projection du film au Festival a été accompagnée par un commentaire tiré de la conférence originale, avec plusieurs descriptions sur les gens et les habitudes des peuples locaux, sur la difficulté de l'expédition et l'itinéraire, sur les divers événements du voyage.

Temporalité des images et réception du public

On a vu quelques exemples de médiation entre film et idée du film que la physionomie de l'archive impose aux choix du chercheur. Le résultat final et plus concret est le rapport entre les films de l'archive et le public, et c'est aussi le moment qui agit le plus sur le présent après avoir interrogé le passé. On s'approche ainsi au cœur du problème, c'est-à-dire la temporalité des images. Qu'est-ce que un public d'aujourd'hui voit, quand il voit le cinéma de il y a cent ans ? Est-ce qu'il voit quelque chose de plus, de moins, de différent par rapport au public contemporain de ces images ?

Pour aborder la question, je veux me refaire à deux grands théoriciens, Abi Warburg et Walter Benjamin, pour lesquels la dimension de réalité et de durée dans l'image est un composant fondamental, et pour lesquels au centre de l'histoire, de toute histoire entendu comme récit, il n'y a pas des objets donnés mais des relations.

La réflexion de base est que toute image produit une temporalité à deux faces : pour Warburg il s'agit d'une polarité, pour Benjamin c'est l'image dialectique.[8] Warburg en particulier parle de vie posthume, ou survivance (« *nachleben* ») des images. La survivance des images n'est pas un donné mais le résultat d'une opération d'un sujet (l'historien, le spectateur), et c'est à travers cette opération que les images du passé se remettent en mouvement, et le passé redevient possible. Alors que Benjamin parle d'image dialectique : dans l'image, il y a d'un côté la présence, de l'autre la représentation, d'un côté le devenir de ce qui change, de l'autre la stagnation de ce qui reste :

> *Ce n'est pas le passé qui jette sa lumière sur le présent ou le présent qui jette sa lumière sur le passé ; l'image est ce dans lequel ce qui a été se réunit avec le maintenant. Image est la dialectique de l'immobilité.*[9]

La résultante est une constellation tensif où les deux termes, instant du présent et instant du passé, ne sont ni enlevés ni composé en unités, mais tenus dans une coexistence immobile et chargé de tensions. En conclusion, ce que le spectateur d'aujourd'hui voit, concerne évidemment cet état tensif, qui nécessairement provoque une nouvelle image, imprévisible, fille de ce mouvement paradoxal et inversé dont parle Jean-Louis Comolli.[10] Le mouvement entre le destin des archives, qui est leur disparition en tant que inscription matérielle, et le désir du spectateur, le souvenir du spectateur qui garde les traces et rend possible la survivance du passé.

Notes

[1] Luigi Virgolin, *Il cinematografo a Bologna nel 1907*, dans Roberto Chiesi, Guy Borlée (sous la dir. de), *Il Cinema Ritrovato 2007*, Cineteca di Bologna, Bologna 2007, pp. 66-67. Le programme était composé par *Madame a ses vapeurs* (Pathé, 1907), *Il varo della corazzata « Roma »* (Cines, 1907) de Filoteo Alberini, *Geneviève de Brabant* (Pathé, 1907), *La Ceinture magnétique* (Pathé, 1907), *Le Scarabée d'or* (Pathé, 1907) de Segundo de Chomón.

[2] Giovanni Lasi, *Milano 1909: il Primo Concorso Mondiale di Cinematografia*, dans Roberto Chiesi, Guy Borlée, Chiara Caranti (sous la dir. de), *Il Cinema Ritrovato 2009*, Cineteca di Bologna, Bologna 2009, pp. 111-112. Le programme était composé par *Nerone* (Ambrosio, 1909), *I bersaglieri* (Ancona Film, 1909), *La Légende du premier violon* (Eclipse, 1909), *The Niagara in Winter Dress* (Vitagraph, 1909), *Villes et cimetières arabes* (Théophile Pathé, 1909) de Alexandre Promio, *Princess Nicotine* (Vitagraph, 1909), *Patrizia e schiava* (Cines, 1909), *La fidanzata di Cretinetti* (Itala Film, 1909).

[3] *Idem*, p. 130.

[4] Jacques Rancière, *Il destino delle immagini*, Pellegrini, Cosenza 2007.

[5] Luigi Virgolin, *Il terremoto di Messina, o dello statuto di realtà*, dans Roberto Chiesi, Guy Borlée (sous la dir. de), *Il Cinema Ritrovato 2008*, Cineteca di Bologna, Bologna 2008, pp. 102-103. Le programme sur le tremblement était composé par *Tremblement de terre de Messine* (Pathé, 1909), *Cocò e il terremoto* (Cines, 1910), *L'orfanella di Messina* (Ambrosio, 1909) de Giovanni Vitrotti.

[6] Giovanni Lasi, *Italia 1907: le ambizioni di grandeur del cinema italiano*, dans Roberto Chiesi, Guy Borlée (sous la dir. de), *Il Cinema Ritrovato 2007*, cit., pp. 70-71. Le programme en projection, où a été inséré le titre non identifié *Launch of the Battleship « Roma » by the King of Italy* (1907), diffère du catalogue qui ne comprend pas ce film.

[7] Giovanni Lasi, *1910 - Gli straordinari viaggi del cinema italiano*, dans Roberto Chiesi, Guy Borlée (sous la dir. de), Il Cinema Ritrovato 2010, Cineteca di Bologna, Bologna 2010, pp. 159-160. Le programme était composé par *Matrimonio interplanetario* (Latium Film, 1910) de Enrico Novelli et *Sul tetto del mondo. Viaggio di S.A.R. il Duca degli Abruzzi al Karakoram* (1909-1910) de Vittorio Sella.

[8] Au sujet de ces deux auteurs, et en particulier des leurs réflexions sur le statut de l'image, voir les travaux de Giorgio Agamben, « Aby Warburg e la scienza senza nome », dans *aut-aut*, n° 199-200, 1984; Giorgio Agamben, *Infanzia e storia: distruzione dell'esperienza e origine della storia*, Einaudi, Torino 1978; Georges Didi-Huberman, *Devant l'image: question posée aux fins d'une histoire de l'art*, Éditions de Minuit, Paris 1990; Georges Didi-Huberman, *Storia dell'arte e anacronismo delle immagini*, Bollati Boringhieri, Torino 2007; Georges Didi-Huberman, *L'immagine insepolta: Aby Warburg, la memoria dei fantasmi e la storia dell'arte*, Bollati Boringhieri, Torino 2006; Giorgio Agamben, *Ninfe*, Bollati Boringhieri, Torino 2007.

[9] Walter Benjamin, *Opere complete. I « passages » di Parigi*, Einaudi, Torino 2000, vol. IX, p. 516 (c'est moi qui traduit). Giorgio Agamben dans *Ninfe*, cit., traduit plutôt « l'image est dialectique dans une situation de pat », en précisant que *Stillstand* ne indique pas seulement un arrêt, mais une seuil entre l'immobilité et le mouvement.

[10] Jean-Louis Comolli, *Vedere e potere: il cinema, il documentario e l'innocenza perduta*, Donzelli, Roma 2006.

Archival Technologies

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From Technology to Medium. The Apparatuses in the Archive as a Source for a New Film and Media History

Her face was aflame, the iris of her eyes was dazzling, and a large tear trembled on the side of her nose: he had never before seen tears of that size and brilliance.
Vladimir Nabokov, *Laughter in the Dark*,[1] 1960

Prologue

As with so many writers and artists of his generation, Vladimir Nabokov was known not to be as fond of film as he was of the *belles lettres* and the high arts (Pushkin, Gogol, Tolstoy); nevertheless, he did go to the cinema as often as he could.[2] He just loved the movies and had a distinct appreciation for "inept American" films;[3] that is to say, he was thrilled by their strangeness that would often induce the comic and the grotesque. For viewers like Nabokov, who saw films early in their lives as well as in the century (Nabokov was shown "homemade movies" at the age of four, in 1903), the cinema was not only new but also strange, and the apparent strangeness of the new medium in its infancy surely had a distinct appeal on that young and sensitive viewer.[4] "If you only knew how strange it felt," as Maxim Gorky famously put it in his often cited *critique* of 1896, describing his visit to Lumière's *Arrival of a Train at La Ciotat* (1896).[5] In retrospect, from our current twenty-first century perspective, it is very hard to understand viewing experiences as the ones Gorky and Nabokov described, because not only the films themselves, but also the technological devices and the viewing practices have changed radically since 1896. Without a profound knowledge of the old technologies and the initial responses to it, one would be quite unable to understand cinema's perceptual and cultural impact from the turn of the century onwards. Interestingly, its initial appeal seemed hardly to have faded for Nabokov in the subsequent decades. Judging from the records of his movie visits, he seemed to have maintained a certain sensitivity to the medium's strangeness; to the cinema's trembling light beam and heroines, the hushing sound of the projector, the "velvety" darkness, the extraordinary size and brilliance of a tear trembling on the side of some mediocre actress' nose in a close-up. Nabokov is often said to have had insane bouts of "laughter in the dark" to such an extent that he was even made to leave the cinema. On such occasions he tended to "shake with laughter, to the point where [...] he would have to leave the hall," as some of his friends noted.[6] It seems not too daring to assume that the "strangeness" of the silent cinema as well as the "ineptness" of the later

American films have left traces in the works of one of the best novelists of the last century[7] and that in many of Nabokov's novels the genuine and lasting impact of the (silent) cinema on his creative mind can still be felt.[8] Consequently, a productive way to read Nabokov would be to read him as a medium-sensitive cinema fan, whose work uniquely shows how the cinema's mediated "realities" are strangely distorted.[9] Indeed, Nabokov's most famous novel, *Lolita* (1957) should be read within such a context. Its main male character, Humbert Humbert, a sexual predator, who is quite aware of his B-movie sex appeal, and a "shining example of moral leprosy,"[10] immediately recalls the sexual fallacies and inadequacies of the *film noir* hero.[11] The basic question for Film and Media studies is not, however, to what extent the cinema's heroes have had an impact on the generation of writers that was to determine the face of literature in the last century; the question is rather how to detect the impact of technologies, viewing experiences, media practices, and sensitivities that are, and have been, so easily overlooked and which are so difficult to recall and understand in retrospect.

The Apparatuses in the Film Archive and "Early Cinema's Alien Quality" (Gaudreault)

At this conference on the Film Archive, I have the pleasure to speak to you as the director of the Film Archive of the University of Groningen. A few years ago, the University of Groningen had the good fortune to be entrusted with the Film Archive donated by our friends and colleagues, the film scholars Eric de Kuyper and Emile Poppe, who founded the Film Department at the University of Nijmegen in the late 1970s.[12] As a former student of theirs, I was thrilled to receive the collection, part of which they, in turn, had received from two private collectors in our country, Tjitte de Vries and Ati Mul,[13] who are now very supportive of our Archive as well, as is the Amsterdam Film Institute EYE, in particular their managing director Sandra den Hamer, and their head curator Giovanna Fossati.[14] Our Archive is embedded *in* a university curriculum (of course there are other universities that have one, but not so all that many). This Archive once was an essential part of the Nijmegen University film curriculum in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. This generous gift demands from us that we now rethink the Archive's function as a source for academic research and education in the field of film and media studies *at this point in time*.[15] Since we are in the process of opening up its sub-collections for education and research at the University of Groningen, we permanently have to reflect on practical matters (regarding restoration) as well as theoretical and historiographical ones. Among the latter are matters regarding the relation between the Archive and its relevance for the study of the history of film, media, and modern culture today. Our reflections mainly concern three sub-collections: a film collection consisting of several thousands of feature films and documentaries (a collection of Marshall Plan propaganda films among them); a paper collection consisting of film posters and film journals; a collection of apparatuses, containing over two thousand technological devices: optical and audio devices from the field of film, from magic lanterns to all sorts of speakers and viewers, montage tables, U-matic and Betamax video recorders from the 1970s, film cameras and film projectors of all types and sizes (and we hope to acquire a 1910 *kinematograph* within months).

It is on the collection of apparatuses, and in particular on the *questions* triggered by the technological devices in our Archive, that I would like to focus in my paper today. We are in the process of turning this collection of optical devices into a Media Archaeology Lab[16] in which students and young researchers can experiment with the perceptual impact of the devices in order to reproduce the initial viewing experiences themselves. It is during such experiments, when one is face to face with these optical and audio devices, that one is reminded of the capricious ways of the course of history: one cannot but wonder why some technological devices had not only a strong and immediate but also an *enduring* perceptual impact on audiences and were turned into a medium, whereas other technologies never made it that far. From a media archaeological point of view our fundamental question regarding the apparatuses is, moreover, how to *un*cover or *dis*cover the perceptual experiences created by technologies which have had a strong cultural impact, e.g. the *kinematograph* or *cinématographe*, but nevertheless got buried under conventional versions of the history of film, media, and technology? In this process of rethinking history from the perspective of the technological devices, we ask ourselves how our activities in the Film Archive can contribute to a new version of Film and Media History – by indeed *acknowledging* what André Gaudreault has called "early cinema's *alien* quality [...] traditional film historians have always tried to paper over."[17] As a film historian, Gaudreault has rightly argued that, besides the new technologies which marked the so-called "birth" of the cinema, "the institution cinema" also created a rupture in the history of the cinema:

> *Our task is to convince ourselves that the fundamental point of rupture in film history was not the invention of the moving picture camera in the 1890s (the* Kinetograph, *the* Cinématographe*) but rather the constitution of the institution "cinema" in the 1910s, an institution whose first principle was a systematic rejection of the ways and customs of early cinema, of a past to which the institution no longer owed a thing (which, moreover, is not entirely untrue). From this perspective, we must insist upon what I have called elsewhere early cinema's alien quality, a properly irreducible alien quality which traditional film historians have always tried to paper over.*[18]

One may well argue that the "institution cinema," which was to create narrative cinema and was very successful in this, indeed started off systematically rejecting the very "*alien* quality" early film makers celebrated as "attractive" and "thrilling" in experiments. These film makers sought to develop and put to use the considerable evocative powers of the new optical technologies by suddenly alienating audiences from their mundane worlds.[19]

In other words, the institution that created classical narrative (Hollywood) cinema may be argued to have created a clear divide between a "before" and an "after" that may well have affected our view of Film History, because film historians for decades sided with the "institution cinema" in helping to ignore and forget what was "alien" to it, thus helping to create a *caesura* which turned early cinema into something to be rejected once again: first by the institution, then by the historians. One may argue that it turned early cinema into something slightly repulsive, toxic, untouchable, primitive and weird.

What we are currently doing in our Archive is trying to contribute to a *new* Film and Media History by opening up a new perspective on the early as well as the pivotal or transitional years of the cinema by studying the cinematic technological devices, and by making the sub-collection of apparatuses productive in a *lab* situation, which allows for experiments and empirical research to help explain: the extraordinary perceptual experience created by some of the devices and the often quite extraordinary, direct, sudden and strong perceptual impact of new technologies on audiences at the moment of their "monstrative" introduction into culture as a technological novelty; secondly the process of "appropriation" or "domestication" by "the institution" that puts the new technology to use.

In other words, we ask ourselves how to analyze the disruptive viewing experiences created by new apparatuses as well as the process that usually follows the first confrontational experiences with the *new* technologies. These novel technologies initially "make[the seen] strange"[20] and thus create a destabilizing moment that invites some stabilizing, smoothening and flattening procedures from the "institution" that wants to put the new technologies to use, e.g. in narrative cinema.

At this point, I would like to digress from these reflections on our activities in the Archive for a moment to reflect on the exact nature of the *cinema experience* as a *media experience*, that is, on the nature of the viewing experience as an instant and strong perceptual experience of the new (optical) technologies involved in the process. As you may know, we have been working with an international team of film scholars, Ian Christie, Dominique Chateau, and Laura Mulvey among them, on contextualizing and historicizing the early years of Russian Formalism in order to excavate those pivotal years from under the predominant post-war readings.[21] This revisit brought us some new insights that are very relevant for the research we are currently doing and planning for the Archive. For this very reason, I would like to first present our new research findings and the implications for archival research, before I return to the issue of the sub-collection of apparatuses in our Archive.

Contextualizing and Historicizing Russian Formalism: Implications for the Archive

It was only in the late 1980s, within the context of opening up a new perspective on early cinema, that André Gaudreault and Tom Gunning stated that theories also need *historicizing*.[22]

The study of early cinema in those days has in many ways provided a turning point in the field of Film and Cinema studies. Basically, what they *did* was historicize French Structuralism. What they *did not do*, however, amidst the debris of French Structuralism of those days, was historicize Russian Formalism. For us, however, benefiting from the ways early cinema studies opened up the field, it was a starting point to assume that the Russian Formalists had been part of the cultural reception of early cinema in Russia. Moreover, it was clear that this very context had not been acknowledged by their post-war readers (most of them from the field of literature, such as their first translators and editors abroad, Viktor Ehrlich, Tzvetan Todorov, and René Wellek among them)[23] and that Russian Formalism indeed badly needed a re-contextualization.[24] It was necessary to free the post-war interpretation of Russian Formalism, constructed within the context of Structuralism and New Criticism, from its post-war heritage restraints, to excavate Russian Formalism and its revolutionary power for the benefit of Film and Media studies. From our revisit we quickly learned that the *early* Russian Formalist activities were not only a part of the activities of the early avant-garde movements in Russia, but that they were also a part of the cultural reception of *early* cinema in Russia.[25] Moreover, we learned that *Art as Technique*, generally considered the *manifesto* of Russian Formalism, was part of these *early* activities: it was written closer to the 1910s than to the 1920s (it is often thought to have been written for *Theory of Prose*, first published in 1919, but was, in fact, only *republished* in that book, and its primary field of relevance was not prose, or fiction, or narration at all). The basic ideas regarding "art" as "technique" were already conceptualized and presented in 1913 by the very young Shklovsky in the avant-garde Cabaret *The Stray Dog* in Petersburg. He shared his ideas about the evocative powers of the "word itself" (the ways it *looked* and *sounded*, not its meanings) with his Futurist friends, the poet Vladimir Mayakovsky among them.[26] Note that that very year, 1913, was also the year "the general craze for cinema reached its peak in Russia."[27] In retrospect, it is not easy to understand the impact of that first decade of the cinema (in Russia), as Yuri Tsivian has convincingly argued. It triggered a robust sense of "strangeness" (the word Gorky famously used) and it even triggered an amount of "craziness." The Futurist poets, with their crazy performances of poetry in Russia, were definitely part of that craze. Stunning examples were provided by Shklovsky's friend, Vladimir Mayakovsky. The poet, in love, described himself as a "cloud in trousers."[28] He was two meters tall, had a loud and deep voice, and he recited his poems for huge audiences wearing a black tailcoat with a radish in one of his buttonholes, to create a stir, to shock, to thrill, to attract and evoke a strong effect in his audience: "Thundering the world with the might of my voice, / I go by – handsome, / twenty-two-year-old."[29]

The Futurists were considered "rascals,"[30] who were as *strange as the cinema*; in fact, they sought to evoke a similar sense of strangeness in their poems as they felt in the cinema.[31]

Interestingly, it was Viktor Shklovsky who responded to this new sort of provocative poetry as a scholar and a theorist. He was the first to theorize on "art" (poetry) in terms of its powerful "strangeness" effects – that is, he deliberately focused on its perceptual impact instead of its meanings. The Russian word *ostran(n)enie* (sometimes written with one *n*, sometimes with a double *nn*)[32] is the key term in *Art as Technique*. The Russian word *stannye* (or *strange*) refers to the ways "technique" may "make [the seen] strange." Shklovsky was the first to acknowledge that "technique" was of primal importance in art, and meanings were not.

That is to say, meanings were quite irrelevant for understanding how art "worked" on audiences and had an impact and evoked responses, as the cinema of those early days and Mayakovsky had also clearly shown. In fact, Shklovsky radically shifted from a hermeneutic perspective to a perceptual perspective on art and he introduced the notion of "technique" (or "device") to replace the "muddled" notions of "form" and "content" and to abduct the "muddled" dichotomy.[33] This all may have been hard to understand for some of his contemporaries in the field of literature (who responded furiously to his polemic assertions), and it was of no particular interest to some of his post-war interpreters, who reduced Russian Formalism to a "formal method" to be used within a hermeneutic context (they decided to silently stick to the dichotomy of form and content as it is generally considered to be the *sine qua non* of text interpretation).

Within the current context of early cinema studies, however, it is easy to see that Shklovsky's shift to perception is sensible. Hence, *Art as Technique* was *not* the clumsy piece of work that Todorov suggested it was, a claim perhaps made in an attempt to do "reverence" to Roman Jakobson in his introduction to the French translation of *Theory of Prose* published in 1965, as Dominique Chateau suggested.[34] Within the pre-war context of the mutual "craze" created by the "cinema of attractions"[35] and the avant-gardes of the day, the manifesto quite understandably demanded the revolutionary abduction of the dichotomy form / content and of the practice of interpretation. Shklovsky clearly called for a new focus on "techniques," or rather, on "art as technique," as the title of his manifesto explicitly states. More specifically, Shklovsky demanded a radically different focus on art than hermeneutics provided: one that privileged the study of (*new*) techniques in relation to their perceptual potential. Although Shklovsky does not explicitly speak of medium sensitivity, we came to see this as the cornerstone of our research and the activities in our Archive. Our revisit of key concepts, premises and implications of the early Russian Formalism clearly reminded us that if we want to understand the history of the cinema, we must approach the viewing experience as a media experience, that is to say, as an experience induced by new technologies; this demands a profound study of technologies involved in the process, thus we tend to focus on the apparatuses in our Archive and their perceptual potential.

We also learned from this revisit that Shklovsky did not merely write a modernist manifesto, as is often thought, but that he basically provided the conceptual space to indeed analyze the perceptual impact of new technologies as well as artistic techniques. As said, Shklovsky does not speak of technology or *medium* sensitivity as we do here. In the early 1910s, he rather focused on verse techniques, in the late 1910s on narrative techniques, and it was not until the 1920s that he started to write about the technologies and techniques of film.[36] This does not mean, however, that what he wrote about (de)automatization is not highly interesting for the study of technologies, and for cinema and media studies accordingly. He uses the Russian word *priom* (*Iskusstvo, kak Priom*), which is usually translated as "technique" or "device." Note that "techniques" (including "artistic techniques"), "technology," and "medium" may, to a certain extent, be used as synonyms in as far as they share that crucial potential to "de-automatize" the automatized viewing routines of an audience.[37]

His conceptualisation of the twin mechanism of de-automatization and automatization helped us to understand the dynamics of the experience of media technologies. We learned that being *sensitive* or *sensitized* to a medium means, first of all, that new techniques which break the automatic routines of perception by "making [the seen] strange" notably slow down, complicate and deepen the perceptual process, and typically create a sensitivity to the technologies involved in the process in this way.[38] At heart, these medium-sensitive experiences (labeled "art" experiences by Shklovsky) are disruptions of the perceptual-cognitive process which accompany instant emotional responses and which are triggered by new technologies that have not yet established a stable relation to the perceptual-cognitive routines. We also learned that being *desensitized* to a medium means that the sensitivity to the medium vanishes as the "strangeness effects" wear off due to the mechanisms of "habituation," "automatization," or "algebraization." Shklovsky:

> *If we start to examine the general laws of perception, we see that as perception becomes habitual, it becomes automatic. Thus, for example, all of our habits retreat into the area of the unconsciously automatic [...]. The process of 'algebraization,' the over-automatization of [the routines of perception of] an object, permits the greatest economy of perceptive effort. Either objects are assigned only one proper feature – a number, for example – or else they function as though by formula and do not even appear in cognition.*[39]

The process of "automatization" inevitably leads to a decrease of sensitivity to the distorting powers of once new technologies to the extent of percipients becoming almost fully insensitive to them. This automatically leads to a point where the presence of techniques in the perceptual process is not noted anymore; thus they become "second nature."[40] Perceiving things as "natural" indicates that, once the mechanisms of automatization enhance a smooth and swift shift in the perceptual process from perceptual input to cognition, fully automatic and unnoticed by the percipients, one may altogether stop to take notice of the ontological difference between beings and things in nature on the one hand and on a canvas, photo, TV, laptop or IMAX wide screen on the other. Now the special ontological status of the image as "mediated" may automatically be overlooked and may well go unquestioned. This is in itself an interesting symptom of percipients being (fully) desensitized to a medium: it easily leads to an (almost full) identification of real and mediated.

This is the reason a de-automatization of the viewing routines may catch viewers by surprise and may indeed suddenly and thoroughly shake their notion of an ontologically stable representational tradition.[41] Since all technologies come with their own set of distortions and disproportions, and never properly fit into the *status quo* routines at first, they will indeed break the habits of perception and start yet another cycle of de-automatization of the viewing routines that will ultimately change the viewing practice.

How deeply the introduction of new technologies may affect culture becomes evident if we study a cycle that is put in motion by the introduction of a major new technology (e.g., the *Cinematograph* or the *Gramophone*, or the introduction of sound in the cinema). First of all, the introduction of such new technologies are often well documented as they tend to generate a rich variety of critical responses by percipients who clearly feel a need to express their notably disturbing and destabilizing experiences. Interestingly, one may undergo an enormous sense of *déjà vu* when reading these documents, as both Tom Gunning and Errki Huhtamo already stated in the 1990s.[42] There is a cyclic reappearance of *topoi* to frame the experience of new media into culture.[43] Moreover, it seems to me that these discourses over time have followed the same historical pattern and that a further understanding of the mechanisms of de-automatization and automatization may be helpful in explaining the dynamics underlying the cycle. Extra knowledge of the perceptual problem that starts the cycle can be gained by studies on the confrontational experience of the unnatural (the field of the grotesque is a treasure trove).

The cycle will usually start with a new technology creating a new type of representation (or a new version of reality) that will be experienced as significantly distorted and highly unnatural, as discourses over time have demonstrated. As such, the seen (or heard) may easily "elicit certain affective states, namely, horror, comic amusement, and awe,"[44] and "these emotional responses have interesting family relations with each other and with the core structure of the grotesque,"[45] as Noël Carroll argues. Pivotal in triggering these instant and strong emotions is the subversion of "our categorical expectations concerning the natural and ontological order."[46] To this we strongly respond: the categories of our understanding suddenly and momentarily fail, as Wolfgang Kayser already stated in his standard work on the grotesque from 1957.[47] Since new technologies, and specifically the optical ones, almost inevitably "grotesquely" distort, fuse, enlarge and/or deform the seen, they typically fuse our biological and ontological categories and destabilize our cognitive routines, thus the experience of new technologies may easily present itself as a paradigmatic experience of the grotesque. This explains the labeling of the seen or heard by percipients as "grotesque!," "fantastic!," "awesome!" (note that a moment of wonder may easily turn into the comic or horrific). The experience of the *grotesque* is not merely or exclusively a perceptual experience of grotesque beings (e.g., fused, enlarged, formless, gigantic beings): it is always, more basically, an experience of the distorting and destabilizing powers of the technologies (or techniques) involved in the representation of beings; e.g., an otherwise normal being may easily turn into a "monster" thanks to the distorting effects of the close-up.

It seems to me that this first phase is normally followed by three distinctly different phases and three different types of discourse, generated around different sets of *topoi*, typically produced in later phases of the cultural (and institutional) process which turns disruptive technological devices into transparent media. Moreover, it seems to me that this process follows a distinct historical pattern, typical for the reception and appropriation of new techniques in culture: from a *mere technology* to a valued *medium* with a distinct cultural function. For heuristic reasons I shall label the distinctly separate phases of the process in terms of: the *monstration*[48] of technological novelties, exploiting the "monstrous" powers of the new technology (there may surely be individual rejections and celebrations of the "monstrous" powers of the new technology);[49] the (avant-garde's group) *celebration* of the distorting and destabilizing powers of the new technologies and the non-institutional experimentation and invention of new deautomatizing artistic techniques; the (institutional) *rejection* of the technology's "alien quality" in the name of the tradition of mimetic representation (e.g., by the "institution cinema" as Gaudreault signaled); the (institutional) *appropriation* of the new technique in the name of mimetic tradition – inventing new technologies and techniques to develop a narrative cinema supported by the powers of automatization.

Film Archives rarely prioritize their collections of apparatuses – this paper is a plea to do so: because apparatuses are basic to an understanding of the transitional moments in film (and media) history, and in culture at large. A profound study of the apparatuses in our film archives may help to explain the dynamics of the process we understand to be essential for a twentieth-century modernization.

Notes

[*] I wish to thank Viola ten Hoorn for her generous support.

[1] Vladimir Nabokov, *Laughter in the Dark*, New Direction Publishing, New York 1960, p. 119.

[2] Alfred Jr. Appel, *Nabokov's Dark Cinema*, Oxford University Press, New York 1974; Richard Corliss, *Lolita*, British Film Institute, London 1994.

[3] Brian Boyd, *Vladimir Nabokov: The Russian Years*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1990, p. 363.

[4] As Nabokov described in the first page of his autobiography, *Speak, Memory: a Memoir* (1951), he was only four years old when he first saw a (home) movie. See for an analysis: Annie van den Oever,

Conversation with Laura Mulvey, in Annie van den Oever (ed.), *Ostrannenie, On "Strangeness" and the Moving Image: The History, Reception, and Relevance of a Concept. The Key Debates: Mutations and Appropriations in European Film Studies*, Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam 2010, pp. 190-191.

[5] See the Introduction to Yuri Tsivian's *Early Cinema in Russia and its Cultural Reception*, Routledge, London 1994, p. 2.

[6] Brian Boyd, *Vladimir Nabokov: The Russian Years*, cit., p. 363.

[7] See also Louis Paul Boon (1912-1979), the European innovator of the novel, whose interest in film and the impact of silent cinema on him equaled that of Nabokov. See Annie van den Oever, *Life Itself. Louis Paul Boon as Innovator of the Novel*, Dalkey Archive Press, Elmwood Park 2008. See also Bart Nuyens, *Louis Paul Boon en de (stille) film*, L.P. Boon-Documentatiecentrum, Universiteit Antwerpen, Antwerpen 1998.

[8] See Barbara Wyllie, *Nabokov and Cinema*, in Julian W. Connolly (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Nabokov*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2005; Galya Diment, "From Bauer's Li to Nabokov's Lo: Lolita and Early Russian Film," in *Cycnos*, vol. 24, no. 1, 2008, http://revel.unice.fr/cycnos/index.html?id=1040, last access 29 July 2011; Alfred Jr. Appel, *Nabokov's Dark Cinema*, cit.; Richard Corliss, *Lolita*, cit.

[9] It also seems highly likely that the cinema was the creative medium that offered "the potential to access alternative realms of existence" to Nabokov: see Barbara Wyllie, *Nabokov and Cinema,* cit., p. 229.

[10] *Idem*, p. 219.

[11] Stanley Kubrick turned this grotesque novel with a *film noir* hero into what Pauline Kael labeled as "black slapstick." See the contribution on *Lolita*, in Pauline Kael, *I Lost It at the Movies. Film Writings 1954-1965*, Marion Boyars, New York 1994, p. 205.

[12] Eric de Kuyper and Emile Poppe are the founders of the Department of Film Studies, Film en Opvoeringskunsten, at the University of Nijmegen, as well as founders of the academic film journal *Versus*.

[13] Tjitte de Vries and Ati Mul are the authors of *They Thought it Was a Marvel,* Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam 2009.

[14] Giovanna Fossati is the author of *From Grain to Pixel. The Archival Life of Film in Transition*, Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam 2009.

[15] Pedagogical dreams on film studies in the 1980s are articulated in an interesting way in Roger Odin's seminal article, "Rêves Pedagogiques," in *Hors Cadre*, vol. 5, L'école-cinéma, 1985.

[16] Preparations for the Media Archaeology Lab are realized by new media specialist Axel Roch, and film engineer Johan Stadtman.

[17] André Gaudreault, *From 'Primitive Cinema' to 'Kine-Attractography,'* in Wanda Strauven (ed.), *The Cinema of Attractions Reloaded*, Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam 2006, p. 98.

[18] *Ibidem*.

[19] There are many viewers who testified to the experience of a sudden "alienation" of the mundane world: Nabokov was certainly one of them. "Cinema's power to transform and transcend mundane reality is a key dynamic in Nabokov's fiction," as Barbara Wyllie wrote in *Nabokov and Cinema*, cit., p. 223.

[20] These words are a translation of Viktor Shklovsky's key term "*ostranenie*" introduced in key texts written by him in the 1910s.

[21] The authors contributing to the project are: Ian Christie, Yuri Tsivian, Dominique Chateau, Frank Kessler, Laurent Jullier, Miklós Kiss, Emile Poppe, László Tarnay, Barend van Heusden, András Bálint

Kovács, Laura Mulvey, and myself. See their contributions in: Annie van den Oever (ed.), *Ostrannenie*, cit.

[22] See Tom Gunning's and André Gaudreault's essay *Early Cinema as a Challenge to Film History*, in Wanda Strauven (ed.), *The Cinema of Attractions Reloaded,* cit., pp. 365-377. Translation by Joyce Goggin and Wanda Strauven.

[23] Note that all were related to the linguist Roman Jakobson and that all took part in a research agenda that tried to combine a hermeneutic enterprise with a "formal" or structuralist method to analyze the text. On the context of French Structuralism, see Dominique Chateau, *Ostranenie in French Film Studies: Translation Problems and Conflicting Interests*, in Annie van den Oever (ed.), *Ostrannenie*, cit., pp. 99-110. Also see Barend van Heusden, *Estrangement and the Representation of Life in Art*, in Annie van den Oever (ed.), *Ostrannenie*, cit., pp. 157-164.

[24] See Annie van den Oever (ed.), *Ostrannenie*, cit. for the contributions by: Ian Christie, *Knights's Moves: Brecht and Russian Formalism in Britain in the 1970s*, pp. 81-98; Dominique Chateau, *Ostranenie in French Film Studies*, pp. 99-110; Emile Poppe, *Christian Metz and the Russian Formalists: A "Rendez-Vous Manqué?,"* pp. 111-115; Laura Mulvey, Annie van den Oever, *Conversation with Laura Mulvey*, pp. 185-203; and Yuri Tsivian, *The Gesture of Revolution or Misquoting as Device*, pp. 21-32.

[25] See Annie van den Oever, in *Ostrannenie*, cit., pp. 33-58.

[26] For a description of Shklovsky's lecture as a freshman in 1913, see Richard Sheldon in his Introduction to *A Sentimental Journey*, Cornell University Press, New York 1970. See also Vladimir Markov, *Russian Futurism and Its Theoreticians*, in Richard Kostelanetz (ed.), *The Avant-Garde Tradition in Literature*, Prometheus Books, Buffalo 1982.

[27] On the year "the general craze for cinema reached its peak in Russia," see Yuri Tsivian in his *Early Cinema in Russia and Its Cultural Reception*, cit., p. 12.

[28] Vladimir Mayakovsky, "A Cloud in Trousers," http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/a-cloud-in-trousers-epilogue/, last access 20 August 2011.

[29] Lines from *A Cloud in Trousers*. See Bengt Jangveldt, *Life at Stake: The Story of Vladimir Majakovsky (Med Livet som insats. Berättelsen om Vladimir Majakovskij)*, Wahlström & Widstrand, Stockholm 2007.

[30] Yuri Tsivian, *Early Cinema in Russia and Its Cultural Reception*, cit., p. 12.

[31] See Annie van den Oever, in *Ostrannenie*, cit., pp. 33-58.

[32] See the Introduction in Annie van den Oever (ed.), *Ostrannenie*, cit., pp. 11-18.

[33] See Boris Eichenbaum, *The Theory of the 'Formal Method,'* in Lee. T. Lemon, Marion J. Reis (eds.), *Russian Formalist Criticism*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln 1965.

[34] Dominique Chateau, *Ostranenie in French Film Studies*, in Annie van den Oever (ed.), *Ostrannenie*, cit., pp. 101-104.

[35] See Wanda Strauven, *The Cinema of Attractions Reloaded*, cit.

[36] Note that Shklovsky speaks of the "general laws of perception" and not of film in *Art as Technique*, and that he took most of his examples from literature in these early years, since it was the field he knew best, as he explained. He theorized on perception and technique from 1913 onwards. From the late 1910s onwards, however, Shklovsky would explicitly reflect on film (techniques) as well. See Annie van den Oever (ed.), *Ostrannenie*, cit., pp. 35-38, 44-45, 56.

[37] Other questions, e.g., regarding the technical specifics and effectual impact of technologies, artistic techniques, and media respectively, I will have to leave unaddressed here for reasons of conciseness.

[38] Viktor Shklovsky, *Art as Technique*, in Lee. T. Lemon, Marion J. Reis (eds.), *Russian Formalist Criticism*, cit., p. 5.

[39] *Idem*, pp. 11-12.

[40] Becoming "second nature" is usually described as a "mindset, skill, or type of behavior so ingrained through habit or practice that it seems natural, automatic, or without a basis in conscious thought," http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/second_nature, last access 7 June 2011.

[41] This type of reaction evidently touches upon the "uncanny" and is indeed described by Tom Gunning in terms of the "technologically uncanny" in a very interesting way in Tom Gunning, *Re-Newing Old Technologies: Astonishment, Second Nature, and the Uncanny in Technology from the Previous Turn-of-the-Century*, in David Thourburn, Henry Jenkins (eds.), *Rethinking Media Change: The Aesthetics of Transition*, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA 2003, p. 49.

[42] Tom Gunning: "Heard over the phone: The Lonely Villa and the de Lorde tradition of the terrors of technology," in *Screen*, vol. 32, no. 2, summer 1991, p. 185, and Errki Huhtamo, "From Kaleidoscomaniac to Cybernerd: Notes toward an Archaeology of the Media," in *Leonardo*, vol. 30, no. 3, 1997, pp. 221-224.

[43] Errki Huhtamo, "From Kaleidoscomaniac to Cybernerd: Notes toward an Archaeology of the Media," cit.

[44] Noël Carroll, *The Grotesque Today*, in Frances S. Connelly (ed.), *Modern Art and the Grotesque*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2003, p. 298.

[45] *Ibidem*. Note that awe or a distinct sense of wonder or astonishment may indeed be part of the experience and in fact are but one set of emotions in a cluster of emotions that share family relations with one another, to use Carroll's words. A sense of wonder and astonishment as part of the initial "strangeness" effect, has been repeatedly discussed by Tom Gunning e.g., in his article on Renewing Old Technologies, already cited here. See also his seminal article *An Aesthetic of Astonishment: Early Film and the (In)Credulous Spectator*, in Linda Williams (ed.), *Viewing Positions: Ways of Seeing Film*, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick 1994.

[46] Noël Carroll, *The Grotesque Today*, cit., p. 298.

[47] Wolfgang Kayser, *The Grotesque in Art and Literature*, Columbia University Press, New York 1957.

[48] The term is coined by André Gaudreault. For a critical analysis of its use, see Wanda Strauven's *The cinema of Attractions Reloaded*, cit. For an analysis of the exploitation of the "monstrous" powers of the technological novelty, see my paper, presented in Udine in 2009: Annie van den Oever, *Monstration and the Monstrous. The Grotesque in the Very Beginning and at the Very End*, in F. Casetti, J. Gaines, Valentina Re (eds.), *In the Very Beginning, at the Very End. Film Theories in Perspective, Proceedings of the XVI International Film Studies Conference-Permanent Seminar on History of Film Theories (Udine, 23-26 March 2009)*, Forum, Udine 2010, pp. 229-242.

[49] The varying amount of tolerance of percipients for such disorienting experiences is discussed in several interesting ways by the cognitivist Reuven Tsur, in *Toward a Theory of Cognitive Poetics*, Elsevier, Amsterdam 1992.

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Dust, Detritus and Joseph Losey's Mothballs

Alan Bennett's 1986 fantasy scenario, *Kafka's Dick*, features an English insurance man, Sydney, who is writing an article for a trade paper about another insurance man, more famous as a writer – Franz Kafka. Sydney and his wife, Linda, invite Max Brod (who fled to Palestine in 1939 and died there in 1968) into their suburban home. Linda kisses the couple's pet tortoise and it metamorphoses into Kafka (who died in Germany in 1924). A conversation then ensues regarding Brod's failure to follow his friend's instructions to destroy all his remaining papers, unread – "stories, novels, letters. Everything" – after his death.[1] The discussion hinges on whether Brod's responsibility lies with his undertaking to act as an executor of Kafka's request, or with his duty to posterity to preserve Kafka's works and ephemera. Without Brod's presumption to ignore his friend's wishes, there would be no Kafka, the writer, Kafka surviving only as yet another forgotten and obscure insurance man. Brod pleads false modesty on Kafka's behalf; Kafka asserts that all modesty is false. Without Brod, indeed, there would be no article for the equally obscure Sydney to write. Nor, as Bennett is well aware, would there be the opportunity for him to write plays about Kafka and the conundrum his particular case presents.

More recent debates concerning Kafka's archive have reminded me of the writer's instructions to Brod. Firstly, were the papers to be digitised then, finally, perhaps, the author's wishes might be honoured and the papers burned (a fortuitous, technical expedient but an ethically slippery solution – a get out clause). Secondly, a suitably Kafka-esque suggestion has been expressed by the descendants of Brod's secretary and mistress, Esther Hoffe (who died in 2007), inheritors of Brod's estate, that Kafka's archive be sold by weight (another sort of compromise – a trial possibly invoking the judgement of Solomon) regardless of any systematic inventory. Thirdly, that claims to the ownership of Kafka's archive are being contested between national, ethnic and linguistic affiliations represented by Czech, German and Israeli institutions. As Judith Butler has observed, the letter to Brod presents an "insurmountable paradox,"

> *since the letter becomes part of the writing, and so part of the very corpus or work, like so many of Kafka's letters that have been meticulously preserved over the years. And yet the letter makes a demand to destroy the writing, which would logically entail the nullification of the letter itself, and so nullify even the command that it delivers.*[2]

Meanwhile, Alan Bennett, a screenwriter as much as a playwright, has given his own archive to the Bodleian Library (which also holds a number of Kafka papers formerly in Brod's custody) in thanks for the education he received at a state school in Britain and, subsequently, through a scholarship to Oxford, modestly regarding his "gift as a debt repaid."[3] Bennett's gift of his intellectual property as an archive accessible by a select public will be turned into a commercial asset through the sale, by the library, of permits, reproduction rights and so forth. What I want to do here is to examine various questions arising from the recent collection, deposition and use of specific paper archives appertaining to certain personnel active in British cinema – though none of them (unlike Bennett) British in origin. I want to consider questions of superfluity, redundancy and gaps in the extant material – and to ponder the potential interpretation of such quantities – while also wondering how the organisation of such material impacts upon (with all due humility) its usefulness to us, and for posterity. Fictional, theoretical and practical accounts of "the archive" will equally be brought into play. We need to consider the functions of selection and the guardianship of the Ark alongside its modern successors, the archive, the museum, and the library. As Jim Bennett and Scott Mandelbrote have observed:

> *Applied as a metaphor, the Ark allowed [...] collectors to become Noahs. Their collections came to represent new Arks, in which learning could be expanded and completed. The knowledge, which might be amassed in these modern Arks, was to be part of the encyclopaedic compendium of nature.*
> *Early museums were often characterised as arks and their keepers as latter-day Noahs.*[4]

Who and where are our Noahs, now? And where do they stand in relation to our trade papers?

Lester

Richard Lester is probably best known for his work in the 1960s (including the "swinging" London films, *The Knack... and How to Get It, A Hard Day's Night* and *Help!*) and in the 1970s (*The Three Musketeers, The Four Musketeers, Robin and Marian* and *Superman II*). In August 2010, Lester, then 78, donating his papers to the British Film Institute National Archive, said: "it is a pleasure for me to be able to offer them the detritus of my working life."[5] On the one hand, we may choose to understand Lester's designation "*detritus*" as simple modesty; on the other, we may choose to understand the term as a relegation of material surplus to the films achieved – extraneous to the body of work screened on film and television – as generated by the daily grind of making and attempting to make these screen texts. But this residue does not, for us, equate with rubbish. It does not, as Michael Thompson suggests in his definition of rubbish, indicate a superior value to another, optional accumulation of stuff. In the process of archiving, it shifts from a transient to a durable state. This stuff (we provisionally presume) will accrue further value by our working on it, but will also survive our working on it (it will not be used up):

> *[T]he fact that the boundary between rubbish and non-rubbish is not fixed but moves in response to social pressures means that new elements may suddenly appear [within a field], whilst others may suddenly disappear in an equally distressing and inexplicable manner.*

> *Rubbish theory, if it does nothing else, serves to draw our attention to the way in which objects are socially processed and to suggest that the description of this process should be included in an answer to the question "how is society possible?" [...]. [T]o me the the charm of rubbish theory is that it seems always to lead straight into illogicality, anomaly and paradox. Regrettably, there are many who find these qualities not so much charming as monstrous, and there are some who would go so far as to maintain that the proper aim and subject of serious thought should be the systematic exclusion of such monsters.*[6]

Practically speaking, the acquisition was prompted by Lester's move from his suburban office: in other words, he no longer had the physical space in which to store it and was constrained to offload it elsewhere.

Lester's archive includes coverage of film tests, location shots and storyboards (in other words, selections made in the process of production). It also includes suggestions for films about the making of Lester's films, unrealised projects (including an offer declined by Alan Bennett) and films long in gestation (including the literary adaptation, *Flashman*). There are letters exchanged with Joseph Losey (a fellow American in London) and his wife and secretary, Patricia.

However, what there is *not* – and admittedly, what I purposefully was hoping to find amidst the "*detritus*" – is any significant mention of the film-making activity which sustained Lester for a number of years after the bombing of *Petulia* in 1968. Even though Lester received letters from collaborators (Spike Milligan) who complained of working on commercials, Lester deliberately or by neglect, has left little trace in this deposited paper trail of his work on award-winning ads in the late 1960s and early 1970s. We have to look elsewhere for a record of this activity. For instance, coverage in the advertising trade paper, *Campaign*, in 1970, and the catalogue of awards devoted to practitioners in British advertising.[7] From this residual material, in addition to Lester's detritus, we may be able to reconstitute some whole.

However, what interests me here is this gap – hypothetically, I wonder whether Lester has self-consciously excised the record or whether he deemed a record of his work in advertising merely as waste matter – as rubbish to be disposed of outside of the archive.

Losey

Michel Ciment's 1985 published interviews with Joseph Losey does include a list of advertising campaigns on which the exiled director worked between 1958 and 1961.[8]

Losey's papers (also held by the BFI) include a 1964 letter to his American publicist, James Proctor, stating that, although he did not like making television commercials, they were "essential to keep me going financially."[9]

This archive might thus provide a clue to Lester's reticence and to the gaps in another archive. But, in current work on Losey's archive, I am more interested in what has survived – and been made accessible – possibly by oversight. What are we to make of Losey's "laundry list," his "to do" list, apparently left casually amongst papers the adaptation, production, exhibition and distribution of *The Servant*?

Moth balls in fur shoes
+ underclothes etc.
sort out sweaters – envelope
                    + mothballs
clean gloves
winter clothes in cupboard –

> *clean + put away*
> ~~*shoes soled + heeled*~~
> *sort through scripts up + down*
> *get marker*
> *sort out stills*
> *Dress suit – France*
> *shirts etc in drawer*

To what purpose can this accident (if accident it be) be used? Is it even – for sure – written by Losey himself? Well, I for one like the idea of a director so very fastidious about matters of pre-production (a director more *Pinter-esque* than Pinter in his editing of the original screenplay), in production and post-production (as witnessed by letters and memos in his archive) being equally careful over his own public presentation and such private matters as the state of his own underwear. Furthermore, in reading this "laundry list," we know already that 1962-63 was a cold winter (i.e. *real* snow in *The Servant*) and that there was a need to wear wool, next to the skin, when filming outdoors, on location. We know that Losey suffered a bout of bronchial pneumonia (from the archive, Dirk Bogarde's memoir and Ciment): so putting away the woollies might be a "goodbye to all that."[10] Perhaps. The note of a dress-suit betokens the Paris première (and successful reception) of *The Servant* in France. Carolyn Steedman's *Dust: the Archive and Cultural History* is a witty and elegant response and riposte to Jacques Derrida's commentary on "archive sickness."[11] By way of the coincidental inhalation of dust – as an occupational hazard – by the nineteenth-century historian, Jules Michelet, Steedman appositely notes:

> *The archive is made from selected and consciously chosen documentation from the past and also from the mad fragmentations that no one intended to preserve and just ended up there [...] and nothing happens to this stuff, in the Archive. It is indexed, and catalogued, and some of it is lost. But as stuff, it just sits there until it is read, and used and narrativised. In the Archive, you cannot be shocked at its exclusions, its emptiness, at what is not catalogued, at what [has been destroyed].*[12]

Pinter, too, donated material to a public institution, placing his papers on permanent loan to the British Library in 1993, the loan becoming a permanent acquisition in December 2007.[13]

We might look here, too, for clues in the archive for illumination of the filmic text. In this process, from inception to completion, a film is only a provisional ending to one narrative; it is not the end of the story.

Kubrick

Kubrick's archive, even before its donation to London's University of the Arts in 2007 and its official opening to the public in 2009, had been selectively toured around public museums and galleries throughout Europe (Berlin, 2005 through to Paris, 2011), augmented with loans from other institutions and private collectors – Ken Adam's magnificent drawings for monumental sets for *Dr Strangelove: or, How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* (1964); Alan Jones style furniture for the Milk Bar in *A Clockwork Orange* (1971); chairs for *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968); costumes; scripts; call sheets; storyboards; camera equipment; file-boxes and stills and all the other paraphernalia – before and after Kubrick's career in Britain.[14] Kubrick grounded himself in Britain voluntarily (unlike Losey) and subsequently refused to leave (at least by air, the holder of a personal pilot's license, he refused to fly). Kubrick exercised control over production equipment (as commented upon, publicly, by Losey) and over distribution (notoriously, for *A Clockwork Orange*) and over film out-takes (many incinerated: another means of "sealing" in perpetuity the distributed copy of a film with the master's imprimatur).

Outside of this, it seems, after his departure for England, he did not throw away *anything*, any of the *paraphernalia*, the outbuildings of his rural retreat affording ample accommodation for 977 boxes containing old film cans, files, photographs and research material for, according to Alison Castle, conveying the sheer scale of the enterprise, "the greatest film never made" – Kubrick's *Napoleon* – and his holocaust projects, *War Time Lies* and *The Aryan Papers*, gazumped by Steven Spielberg.[15] The curator, Sarah Mahurter, testifies that Kubrick's collections confirm his "uncompromising vision, his rigorous attention to detail, his expansive preparatory research and his remarkable technical and conceptual innovation."[16] For *Napoleon*, preparatory work extended to the acquisition of "a specimen of the type of nail used for shoeing horses in cold weather, obtained as part of Kubrick's research into the theory that horses used in the Russian campaign were not shod properly for winter."[17]

Kubrick's artistic perfectionism (suggested Jon Ronson's More 4 television documentary about Kubrick, *Stanley's Boxes*, broadcast to coincide with the transfer of the archive to London) verged on lunacy; indeed, Kubrick's idiosyncratic yet totally systematic filing of positive, negative and "crank" fan-mail might baffle even Foucault's wonderment at the potentially in-orderly ordering of things at the opening of *The Order of Things*.[18] He busied himself (like Losey) with reports of screenings of his films outside London – in what London circles might regard as the provinces. Kubrick obsessively self-archived and compiled his own library and museum for his own purposes. He took possession, relinquished only in death, by his descendants. Indeed, the very objects of the containment – the constraints of the archive – became Kubrick's personal obsession (the size of the box, the thickness of the cardboard, the easy fitting of the lid). Presumably, the boxes, however edited already, contain an amount of material potentially wanted by us, while also excluding what is not wanted by us: dust, moths, woodworm and other unwelcome invasions and intrusions. In *Orlando* (1928), as much a wry and witty contemplation of the writing of history as itself an historical novel devoted to a fictional figure, Virginia Woolf commented on the limits imposed on historians by the marking of manuscripts with burns, crumbs of pastry, flakes of tobacco, inkblots, even blood – holes and obliterations of one sort or another – conjecture and imagination routinely being pressed into service where the record fails.[19] Julian Barnes' 1989 *A History of the World in 10½ Chapters* returns to the theme, imagining the import of wax stains on documents written by Benjamin Franklin and the presence of unwelcome stowaways in the first archive – the Ark.[20]

A.S. Byatt's 1990 novel, *Possession*, is concerned with both the ownership of archives and characters possessed by historic figures. The young academic, Roland Michell, is not only an affiliate of the dusty historian, Jules Michelet, but is also contained, implicated if in name only in the subject of his thesis – the invented Victorian poet, Randolph Ash (ash being as dead as dust, or living, as the tree called Ash). Maud Bailey, a family descendant of Ash's correspondent and fellow poet, Christabel La Motte (likewise linked by name), is interested in La Motte's fairy tales, her castle metaphors, and the suggestion contained within that she, too, might illegitimately carry the blood of Randolph Ash. Here, memorised texts guide the protagonists' discovery and interpretation of the archival material they chance upon both accidentally and purposefully (amidst much dust) in Maud's forsaken old nursery at Seal Court (a seal waiting to be opened).

Michell and Bailey combine forces – and their privately discovered evidence – in a quest to save hitherto undiscovered papers from an American collector (dubbed Cropper), unapologetically intent upon harvesting memorabilia for his private museum, whereas Maud would have them placed in a British university, with public access. Beatrice Nest, meanwhile, acts as guardian of her own nest, as keeper of the diaries and laundry lists of

Ash's forgotten wife, Ellen – his help meet. Beatrice is a woman who dresses in hand-knitted, grandmotherly woollen jumpers, overseeing a woolly muddle, exemplifying her own "*system* [...] for recording things," annotated with her own hieroglyphics.[21] Beatrice's devotedly blind guardianship ultimately yields a vital clue in Roland's quest.

Neil la Bute's 2002 film adaptation of Byatt's romance (fairly compared by reviewers to Pinter's adaptation of John Fowles' *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (directed by Karel Reisz, 1981) in its attempts to cover time and space and internal and external monologue) narratively prioritises thefts from an archive and grave-robbing, while spectacularly privileging dust, rust, mildew, mould and the drama surrounding unbroken locks on boxes of souvenirs of a lover and unbroken wax seals on letters (implicating the protagonists) contained therein: the thrill of the quest. Roland and Maud piece together evidence conclusively proving an affair between Ash and La Motte while falteringly embarking on a love affair of their own.

In his inspiringly generous dissertation, *The Gift*, Lewis Hyde identifies three different aspects of the term circulating in common usage. It can be taken to mean the gift of imagination or experience bestowed upon an individual; the talent or ability to accomplish the work entailed; or the finished piece, either "offered to the world in general or directed back specifically to the 'clan and homeland' of the earlier gift:"[22]

> *Now that we have seen the figure of the circle we can understand what seems at first to be a paradox of gift exchange: when the gift is used, it is not used up. Quite the opposite, in fact: the gift that is not used will be lost, while one that is passed along remains abundant.*[23]

As members of the Udine Forum community may be aware, there has been some anxiety of late concerning the British Film Institute's guardianship of its archive and library – its museum holdings having been dispersed, already, several years ago. It has even been suggested that material given in trust to the BFI should be consigned to join Pinter's bequest – in the British Library. Quite apart from the fact that access to the archive would thus be restricted to scholars – which seems to contradict the BFI's declared intention to broaden rather than to limit yet further its service to the public – the proposal seems to me not only to disregard the circumstances of particular donations but also to dishonour conceptually the nature of the gift. Surely the homeland of these paper archives should remain with the films, to be circulated and augmented within that clan?

In other words, while we decide what lies inside and outside of the "texts" we choose to study, I propose also that those of us who use the archive (who endorse and lend value to the archive through its use, "narrativeisation" and circulation), choose responsibly in whom we invest our trust and to whom, to which Noah, we repay our debt.

Notes

[1] Alan Bennett, *Kafka's Dick [1986]*, in *Two Kafka Plays: Kafka's Dick and the Insurance Man*, Faber and Faber, London 1987, Act I, Scene 1.

[2] Judith Butler, "Who Owns Kafka?," in *London Review of Books*, 3 March 2011, pp. 3-8; BBC Radio 4 *Today* programme, 5 February 2011, reported a debate of the issues, hosted by the *London Review of Books*. Butler investigates Kafka's intended destination for his papers, and the notion of non-arrival, by way of "clues" in his published work. See also, Rory McCarthy, "Israel adds a final twist to Kafka's Trial," in *The Observer*, 25 October 2009, p. 47.

[3] Maev Kennedy, "A small way of saying thank you: Bennett donates his life's work to the Bodleian," in *The Guardian*, 24 October 2008, http://www.guardian.co.uk/stage/2008/oct/24/alan-bennett-oxford-university, last access 3 March 2011.

[4] Jim Bennett, Scott Mandelbrote, *The Garden, the Ark, the Tower, the Temple*, Bodleian, Oxford 1998, pp. 8, 75.

[5] Mark Brown, "Richard Lester archive donated to BFI full of 'riches,'" in *The Guardian*, 23 August 2010, http:www.guardian.co.uk/film/2010/aug/23/richard-lester-archive-bfi/print, last access 9 November 2010.

[6] Michael Thompson, *Rubbish Theory: the Creation and Destruction of Value*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1979, pp. 12, 131.

[7] Charles Marowitz, "What I Think About Advertising," in *Campaign*, 11 September 1970, p. 23.

[8] Michel Ciment, *Conversations with Losey*, Methuen, London-New York 1985, pp. 422-423.

[9] Letter from Losey to Proctor, BFI Special Materials JWL/1/11/5, 24 January 1964.

[10] John Coldstream, *Dirk Bogarde: the Authorised Biography*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London 2004, pp. 295-296; Michel Ciment, *Conversations with Losey*, cit., p. 227.

[11] See Jacques Derrida, *Mal d'archive: Une impression freudienne*, Galilée, Paris 1995. Steedman explores both the circumstances surrounding the publication of Derrida's essay and its content.

[12] Carolyn Steedman, "The Space of Memory: in an archive," in *Dust: The Archive and Cultural History*, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick 2002, p. 68.

[13] Zoe Wilcox, British Library Modern Theatre Blog, last access 28 October 2010.

[14] See Bernd Eichorn, Eleonore Emsbach, Gerold Hens, Natalie Lettenwitsch (eds.), *Stanley Kubrick*, Deutsches Fillmmuseum, Frankfurt 2004: the comprehensive catalogue accompanying the exhibition.

[15] Preparatory photographs of Johanna ter Steege, the actress Kubrick had chosen for the film, became the basis for the Jane and Louise Wilson piece *Unfolding the Aryan Papers*, researched by the artists while in residence at the University of the Arts, London, and shown at the BFI Southbank Gallery in 2009.

[16] Sarah Mahurter, "Creating the new university archives and special collections centre at University of the Arts London," in *Art Libraries Journal*, vol. 32 no. 4, 2007, http://ualresearchonline.arts.ac.uk/2657/, pp. 29-34, last access 20 June 2011.

[17] Alison Castle, *Stanley Kubrick's Napoleon: The Greatest Film Never Made*, Taschen, Cologne 2011, p. 75. This, a single volume publication, renders more widely accessible material previously contained in a limited collector's edition and includes a key card to Taschen's online research database of Kubrick's picture file of some 17,000 Napoleonic images. See also Arnaud Bordas, "Ces grands films que vous ne verrez jamais," in *Le Figaro Magazine*, 2 April 2011, pp. 50-54.

[18] Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* [*Les Mots et les choses (Une archéologie des sciences humaines)*, Gallimard, Paris 1966], Routledge, London 2002, pp. xvi-xvii, quoting from Jorge Luis Borges.

[19] Virginia Woolf, *Orlando*, Penguin, London 1993, pp. 84, 122.

[20] Julian Barnes, *A History of the World in 10$^1/_2$ Chapters [1989]*, Picador, London 1990, pp. 3-30.

[21] Antonia Susan Byatt, *Possession*, Vintage, London 1991, p. 117.

[22] Lewis Hyde, *The Gift*, Vintage, London 1999, p. 191.

[23] *Idem*, p. 21.

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Amateur Film, Benjamin's Aura and the Archive or: the Archive as Amateur Film's Age of Technological Reproducibility

Contemporary archival theory stresses the active role of archives, being shapers and (co-)creators of records, meaning and memory. As Cook and Schwartz argue, "the archivist is an actor, not a guardian, a performer, not a custodian."[1] Furthermore they maintain that archives are "performers in the drama of memory-making" and should perform in a self-conscious way: accept their subjectivity and be aware of their role as active performers.[2]

This influencing role of archives is touched upon by researchers regarding amateur film; the status of amateur film changes by crossing the threshold of the archive. Roepke speaks of two different cultural spheres – the private one of the attic and the public one of the archive – and says that the transition of amateur film from the attic to the archive has material effects.[3] De Klerk explains that the film in the archive undergoes changes in coherence and meaning[4] and Orgeron states that by interrupting the personal collection and context of family history, the film as object "is stripped of its aura, its temporal, geographical, and personal specificity."[5]

Against this background, my paper investigates the mechanisms of the archive by discussing the relationship between the film archive and amateur film and how by the tasks of preservation, restoration and provision of access the archive influences amateur film's features of uniqueness and aura.[6] I will firstly elaborate on the aura of amateur film within the film's initial life within the family and subsequently turn to the archive, amateur film's second life and what happens to the aura during this archival life.

The Aura of Amateur Film

Taking Benjamin's essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility* as starting point, I distinguish between a material side and an immaterial side of the phenomenon Benjamin calls "Aura."

The Material Side of Amateur Film's Aura

Regarding the material side, it's uniqueness and authenticity that make up this aura. Benjamin says that authenticity is defined by "the here and now of the work of art – its unique existence in a particular place."[7] Only an original work has such a definite place with which it is most closely connected, that makes it authentic and gives it its aura. He refers to a cathedral as an example that is surrounded by an aura in its original place with its particular atmosphere. This aura is lost in the case of an illustration of the cathedral, as the atmosphere of the site is gone.[8] This emphasis on the artwork's physical place and anchoring with its *here and now* demonstrates the material significance regarding the concept of aura: only in the case of an original – a unique and sole *object* that can be ascribed to a definite place – Benjamin speaks of an *auratic* work.

In the case of amateur film, most home movies are shot on 16mm or 8mm reversal film. This special material allows developing a single positive directly from the original film, rather than producing a separate positive print from the negative. As Zimmermann puts it: "[...] simply speaking, the negative is bleached and re-exposed to produce a positive."[9]

Consequently the reversal process requires only one filmstrip that is both, negative and positive.[10] This means that, in contrast to professional film, which consists normally of many prints, a reversal amateur film exists only in one single copy, one unique object. This original can be ascribed to one particular place – its *here and now*. Nevertheless, material uniqueness goes beyond reversal material and can be seen as a feature of amateur film in general, independent of the material or film gauge used. This uniqueness is connected with the immaterial context of amateur film: the private sphere of the family. I will illustrate this with an example that will serve as case study throughout this paper. This example is the collection of family films belonging to Dutchman Jan Teunissen, who lived with his family in England in the 1920s. Between 1922 and 1935 he made amateur films about his two sons John and Dick, his first two wives and friends. Later, in the 1930s, he became a professional filmmaker, made avant-garde sound films[11] and the first Dutch sound feature film about William I, prince of Orange. During the Second World War, Teunissen collaborated with the Germans and became the most powerful man in the Dutch film industry. This would however also herald the end of his film career after the war.

Teunissen's collection is a quite special corpus of amateur films since he did not shoot his family films on a typical amateur film gauge[12] but on 35mm nitrate.[13] Furthermore, his films are tinted and toned, which makes this collection even more beautiful and unique. However, there is no 35mm reversal film, so strictly speaking there is not only one element of Teunissen's films but at least two: the original camera negative and the positive print. Even so, to show and watch his family films in the private family circle, Teunissen only needed one positive copy of each film. Therefore, this positive print can be seen as unique *specimen*.[14] In addition, the tinting and toning make Teunissen's films unique objects with unique characteristics.[15]

To summarise, in the case of amateur film the positive print can usually be seen as identical to *the* film and therefore is an original, authentic work. This authenticity and uniqueness of the material makes it possible to ascribe each amateur film to a particular place, a defined *here and now*, which originally lies in the private context of the family. It is this context that also contributes to the special veil of amateur film and the immaterial side of its aura.

The Immaterial Side of Amateur Film's Aura

Benjamin stresses the connection between aura and tradition as he says: "The uniqueness of the work of art [*that is, its aura*; E.H.] is identical to its embeddedness in the context of tradition."[16] This is expressed in a cult in which the artwork has a ritual function.[17] The original work of art is embedded in a certain tradition or cult, which forms its context or veil and contributes to its aura. One could call this the immaterial or spiritual equivalent of the topographic *here and now*. Both the artwork's material context (being tied to a particular place) and its immaterial context (being embedded in tradition) are in Benjamin's view important for the aura. Teunissen's amateur films have their original *here and now* in the private collection of the Teunissen family. In this sense, they are embedded in the tradition of this family, which forms their immaterial veil. Moreover, in this personal context, the films receive a ritual value. Family films in general and Teunissen's home movies in particular show a complex relation to the ritual.[18] They record rituals, produce rituals and finally they become rituals themselves.

An example of a recorded ritual in Teunissen's films is the celebration of his sons' birthdays throughout the years. In the *John & Dick* films we repeatedly see one of the two boys surrounded by a big amount of birthday presents. This scene is usually introduced by a shot of a birthday cake stating the name and age of the birthday boy. Another shot shows a page of a calendar and a hand pointing at the date of the birthday. By shooting his sons' birthdays every year anew, Teunissen does not only record this common ritual but intensifies and confirms it by giving the general birthday ritual a personal tone.

Regarding produced rituals, it is the camera and the well known cameraman that cause this kind of *camera* or *amateur film rituals* like the direct look into the camera, waving or blowing a kiss in the camera's direction.[19] In Teunissen's films there are numerous shots of people looking and laughing directly into the camera. For instance, there is a shot of his wife Elizabeth standing with her two sons in front of the family car, all three looking up to where Teunissen and the camera stand.

Finally, the third connection between amateur films and ritual is that they become rituals themselves.[20] I want to name the ritual or cult of remembrance here as example.[21] As a form of visual memory, it is possible to refresh ones own remembering via a family film. In this sense, Aasman adopts Krol's expression of "tent poles of the memory."[22] Consequently, Teunissen's family films allow Teunissen, his wife and their sons to remember their life in England and Holland in the 1920s and 1930s. Also, they can remember the recorded and produced rituals as ritual moments of the shooting.[23] However, as Aasman emphasizes, watching amateur films is only one side of the remembrance ritual. In fact, it starts with the making of these films, since the shooting itself produces memories for later.[24] When Teunissen filmed his sons on their birthdays and his family in front of the car, he carried out a ritual act of remembrance. This, he did not do alone, but together with his *actors* in front of the *camera*. Through teamwork, they gave form to the shots, which would later be the *tent poles* of their own memory.[25]

To recapitulate, amateur films record, produce and become rituals themselves, which surround the films as immaterial context. These rituals are personalised (produced, carried out, screened and seen by intimates)[26] so that the immaterial context of each amateur film and each collection of amateur films is unique and distinctive. Thus, amateur films are not only unique objects concerning their material, but also regarding their immaterial content and context that is formed by the specific family.

Going together with the ritual or cult value, Benjamin speaks of a restricted exhibition value that is characteristic for an *auratic* work. As he writes, "cult value as such even tends to keep the artwork out of sight,"[27] and he refers to statues and sculptures that are accessible only to priests or only during a special period.[28] The cult value effects a reception by a few or a single person, excluding the masses. An artwork has an aura the more its cult or ritual value predominates; a work that is characterised exclusively by its exhibition value owns no aura since it lacks a spiritual, traditional cover.[29]

The exclusion of the masses is true for amateur films since they are accessible only for a few – the members of the particular family. Usually home movies are exhibited as distinctive objects in and for the family circle only.[30]

Therefore, their exhibition value is restricted – appropriate to an *auratic* work that is characterised by material uniqueness and a pronounced cult or ritual value.

Amateur Film and the Archive I: Loss of Aura

In the previous paragraph I have elucidated the aura of amateur film within the film's original family context. In the following paragraph I will turn to the archive and discuss what happens when amateur film leaves this context and crosses the threshold of the archive, or rather, how the archive causes the loss of amateur film's aura.

For Benjamin, it is technological reproducibility that makes the aura disappear, because it causes the appearance of identical, indistinguishable copies and a rapid acceleration of reproductions.[31] This makes the material uniqueness and authenticity of an artwork disappear since the copies cannot be distinguished from the original any more. Therefore, the artwork cannot be ascribed to a unique *here and now*. As Benjamin writes: "By replacing the work many times over, it [*the technology of reproduction*; E.H.] substitutes a mass existence for a unique existence."[32] The reproduced artwork can be at various places at the same time and its mass existence goes together with the separation from tradition and cult,[33] accompanied by an increased exhibition value: with a number of identical copies a work can be seen by more recipients at the same time and in the case of mass media works, the reception even takes place *in* the masses.[34] The unique distance of an *auratic* artwork is transformed into the closeness of the masses to the reproduction, which is surrounded by an empty vacuum; the aura is gone. This ultimately has such a great influence on perception in general that even a traditional, original work loses its aura since this work too is seen in the context of mechanical reproduction. In the age of technological reproducibility a work is perceived as one amongst others and not as original any more.[35]

Regarding amateur film, the loss of aura takes place by entering the archive.

The Material Side: From Original to Copy

Teunissen's amateur film collection was given as a private donation from the family to the film archive of the *Rijksvoorlichtigingsdienst*,[36] one of the predecessors of the Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision where the films are kept today.

One of the core tasks of a film archive is the preservation of a film for the future. Active film preservation always means duplication and thus goes beyond the pure storage of the material.[37] The necessity of active preservation becomes very clear in the case of nitrate film, which deteriorates due to its chemical composition until in its final state, the film has become dust.

In the past, a part of Teunissen's amateur film collection was preserved, or rather, *used* to put together the compilation *Teunissen & Relatives*. The positive tinted and toned *John & Dick* films remained unpreserved until 2010, when the Institute for Sound & Vision was able to preserve these films thanks to the project *Images for the Future*. This government funded project is a collaboration between six Dutch partner institutions[38] and has the objective to digitize and make accessible the audiovisual cultural heritage of the Netherlands. However, the project is not restricted to digitisation only but partly includes analogue film preservation as well. In this context, Teunissen's films were preserved using the so-called Desmet method, which makes it possible to *restore* faded tinted and toned colours.[39] It is a two-step preservation: In a first step a new b&w duplicate negative is made; in a second step an answer print on colour film stock is made from this b&w negative by flashing the colours on the print in a second run through the printer.[40]

Consequently, there are now three physical elements of *John & Dick* in the archive: the original nitrate print, the b&w duplicate negative and the colour answer print. Thus, the professional, technical and financial capabilities of the Institute for Sound & Vision[41] made Teunissen's amateur films works of technological reproducibility or rather actual mechanically reproduced works that from now on exist in several copies. By this, the material uniqueness of the films is lost, as well as their unique existence in *one* place. The *here and now* is split up into *three* places since the films themselves are divided into three materials. The print is consequently not identical with *the* film any more but becomes one copy amongst others.[42]

Another aspect related to preservation and restoration is the demystification of the original and the destruction of the auratic distance. Before the actual duplication of *John & Dick*, the physical condition of the reels had to be inspected. Such an inspection stresses the profanity and banality of the material, like scratches, damages, rain, rust or dirt. Furthermore, the film had to be repaired before printing. Here, the restorer keeps no distance from the material but penetrates into the film material. Benjamin compares the cameraman to a surgeon, violating an artwork's distance by entering deeply into its body.[43] Comparable with this, the film restorer too becomes a surgeon, breaking the distance and aura of a film. This becomes most obvious in the case of *Teunissen & Relatives*. In 1995 the Teunissen collection was used to select a compilation, which was restored. During this *restoration*,[44] the selected shots were literally taken from the original nitrate, edited together in chronological order and new inter-titles were added where they were missing. This act of making a new montage using the original material clearly shows the surgical penetration into the work, which changes the nature of the original and makes any aura of the original object disappear that, in addition, by being duplicated becomes one copy amongst others.

The Immaterial Side: From Cult Value to Exhibition Value

Regarding the immaterial side of aura, a contextual change takes place when amateur film enters the archive. The Teunissen film collection is torn out of the private sphere of the family and its very unique family tradition and put into the public context of the archive. Therefore, the cult value of Teunissen's films is gone, since in the archive there is no ritual of remembering one's personal past, family history and film shooting any more. The personalised, distinctive character of the films has disappeared due to the loss of their original family context, which is not *conservable* in the archive, as it inevitably puts the films in a new context.

This loss goes together with an increase of the exhibition value. Taking a look at the restoration of *Teunissen & Relatives* again, we can emphasise that the accessibility to the Teunissen films – and thus their exhibition value – has increased by making this compilation. The original material was split up in eighteen cans, partly unedited. Taking this into account together with the fact that it is nitrate material, whose projection is prohibited today due to its inflammability, it becomes obvious that Teunissen's original home movie collection was not really accessible. By making a compilation of these films and copying them onto safety film, the accessibility consequently increased.

More precisely, a 35mm and 16mm projection copy were made[45] plus further copies such as a VHS consulting copy, a Digi-Beta and digital files. All these elements clearly hint at the increased exhibition value: more people, non-family-members, can see and have access to Teunissen's home movies in the archive. The access can also include in-house-screenings, distribution, DVD's or the reuse in television programmes. In fact, in 2008 *Teunissen & Relatives* was used for the Dutch history programme *Andere Tijden*, through which these family films came closer to a huge audience.

Digitisation and access in the digital domain can even make accessibility and exhibition value rise to the extreme. Through a project like *Images for the Future* which aims to make the Dutch audiovisual cultural heritage digitally accessible, amateur films – as part of this heritage – will become broadly accessible for the masses, become commonplace and part of the collective memory, which in contrast to the ritual of amateur film in the family context maintains no personalised remembering of a unique, individual past.

Increased accessibility and exhibition value of amateur film can thus be seen as a result of preservation. The archive becomes the producer of amateur film's exhibition value.[46]

Connected with this, an amateur film becomes one amongst others in the archive. As a result of the depersonalisation and de-ritualisation, amateur films become comparable and interchangeable. For the archivist and the non-family audience, Teunissen's films are part of all those baby films, all those birthday films, all those holiday films. They are perceived as one reproduction of family life amongst others and thus lose their uniqueness. This is what Benjamin calls the perception of sameness in the age of technological reproducibility, which seizes even the originally unique.[47]

The Death-Drive of the Archive to Destroy the Aura of Amateur Film

In summary, the aura of amateur film disappears in the archive in both respects its material and immaterial parts. Material uniqueness and authenticity, two traits that are bound to a definite and singular *here and now*, vanish, as well as amateur film's context within the family and embedding in tradition. The lost cult value is replaced by an increased exhibition value; the *distance*, however close it may be, is transformed into a closeness to the masses. To put it more aggressively, the archive forms the age of technological reproducibility for amateur film as it destroys its aura. This loss of aura is connected with the very basic tasks of the film archive: preservation, restoration and making accessible. Consequently the destruction of aura is unavoidably at work. By trying to keep Teunissen's amateur films safe, their aura is destroyed.

In his postmodern archival theory, Derrida speaks of the death-drive of the archive, which goes hand in hand with the archive's economy of keeping safe. In the very attempt to keep safe and fight the death-drive, it is exactly this death-drive that is at work. As Derrida says: "The death drive is not simply at work in killing, in producing death, but in trying to save, in a certain way, the memory."[48]

Following Derrida, we can say that this destructive mechanism of the archive is also at work in the case of the aura of amateur film. The aura is not simply lost for non-preserved films, that will thus not survive – and nor will their aura – but it is particularly lost for preserved amateur films, in the activity of trying to protect. Consequently, there is a "radical drive to destruction"[49] at work in the archive regarding the aura of amateur film, which cannot be escaped. The more ambitious the attempts to preserve and save an amateur film, the more radically the aura is destroyed. The archival impulse[50] becomes an aura-destructive impulse. Just as Derrida concludes that we "archive against memory,"[51] I conclude that we archive against aura, burning into ashes the aura of amateur film.

Amateur Film and the Archive II: Archive Aura of Amateur Film

In the end, the question remains if this is the definite end of amateur film's aura. Derrida distinguishes between a radical form of destruction (or forgetting) in the archive, without leaving any trace or reminder, and a less radical type, which leaves something behind, a certain rest so to speak.[52] Thus, is there possibly such a rest of amateur film's aura left behind in the archive – some *ashes*?

The Rest-Aura *of Amateur Film*

As described above, it is the production of new copies in particular that makes the material part of amateur film's aura disappear. Nevertheless, despite this technological reproduction, the original artefact and the new copies remain to a certain degree distinguishable and are indeed distinguished in the archive. Teunissen's original nitrate films are described in the database of the Institute for Sound & Vision *as* originals[53] contrary to the duplicates, which are categorised as preservation elements[54] and duplicate negative or answer-print. Moreover, access to the nitrate originals is restricted, especially if there are new copies, digital files, a VHS or DVD available.[55] Finally very fundamentally, the policy to store the original nitrate artefact as best as possible in each case[56] makes clear the fact that original and copy are not completely interchangeable and that the original is not entirely replaceable. Consequently, there is a rest of authenticity and uniqueness of the original left.

In the course of taking a second look at the immaterial side of amateur film's aura, one can say that in spite of the predominant destruction of the original family context, this context is a shadowy presence in the archive, in so far as the films of a particular family like the Teunissen's are categorised as films of this family and often stored together in successive order. This of course applies only for amateur films that have been identified and whose provenance is known. Archivist and audience can perceive a rest-family-context. Through the people in frame and the "handwriting" of the cameraman,[57] the films still speak of their families as their original veil. In the end, such a rest-family-context can even be perceived regarding non-assignable amateur films – as a remnant of a family tradition that has lost its clear affiliation.

The Archive-Aura *of Amateur Film*

While the family context is a shadowy presence as a rest, it is primarily the contextual change causing the loss of aura, that predominates. But it is exactly this contextual change that also makes the emergence of a new aura possible, going beyond the *rest-aura*, by giving amateur film a new context that surrounds them in the archive. This context is linked with a new *here and now*. Although split in various materials by duplication, Teunissen's amateur films are once again bound to *one* specific place in which all materials accumulate: The *here and now* of the Institute of Sound & Vision archive.

In reference to Benjamin, Groys speaks of a "re-territorialization of the copy,"[58] which effects a new creation of original and aura. He emphasises the topological trait of Benjamin's aura concept: the original has a particular place and by this an aura; the *aura-less* copy on the other hand is virtual, placeless and cannot be located.[59] Therefore, Groys argues, the copy becomes an original with aura once it is given a particular place. It is thus "re-territorialization" that reverses the loss of aura and causes a "(re)originalization"[60] and "reauratization" of the copy.[61]

In particular, Groys names the museum as the place where a copy can be transformed into an *auratic* original but stresses that there are other places of aura.[62] In this context, the archive too can be seen as such a place. Derrida explains that the archive is an "external location"[63] and consequently, being itself located, the archive can locate a copy and give an amateur film (with all its copies) a new *here and now*. The "re-territorialization" subsequently makes possible the embedding in a new context and tradition. This is the context and tradition of the archive, in which finally amateur film can become anchored in new rituals and thus receive a new cult value.

As such a new ritual, I want to name the celebration of the material in the film archive as example, which is connected with a certain cult of the original.[64] I have already mentioned the indications in the database to the original, the restricted access to the nitrate material and its storage in the physical archive. These aspects can be seen in light of a celebration of the original and physical film. This ritual seizes the new prints as well. Just as Groys speaks of an *originalization* of the copy in a museum, the film archive makes each print a unique *specimen*, as it gives it a place. Also, you can see this in the database that precisely identifies each print as a unique artefact by giving each its own number and describing its characteristics.

Thus, it is possible to speak of a celebration and ritual of material film as original in the archive, in which amateur film becomes embedded and receives a new cult value.[65] The archive gives amateur film a new *here and now* and implants it in a new context that affects this new cult value in the rituals of the archive. A new aura of amateur film emerges, in its material and immaterial regard, which is produced exclusively in and by the archive.

Conclusion

In conclusion, one can say that amateur films own an aura in their initial life within the family, which is composed of material uniqueness, authenticity and an immaterial context that embeds the films in the unique tradition of a particular family and their special ritual features, which constitute the cult value of these films. This aura disappears in the archive due to the most basic tasks of the film archive. Preservation, restoration and provision of access destroy material uniqueness and authenticity, increase the exhibition value and devastate the embedding in the context of the private sphere of the family. However, despite this death-drive to destroy the aura of amateur film, there is a rest of this aura, which survives in the archive, and, more resolutely, a newly produced archival aura. Thus, there are two different auras: the first one linked with the initial family context and the second connected with the archive as new *here and now*. The first one is almost completely destroyed by the archive, but revolts in the form of a shadowy, ashy rest. The second one arises from these ashes; it needs the destruction of the initial aura and family context to be able to come into being in the archival context.[66]

Derrida compares the work of the archivist with the work of mourning that consists of both remembering and forgetting the dead in order to move on.[67] In this sense, the work of the film archive regarding the aura of amateur film is also a work of mourning. It remembers the initial aura and context of amateur film by the *rest-aura* and at the same time forgets it and destroys it. This forgetting or destruction makes the emergence of a new, archival aura possible.[68]

The archive is thus both the destroyer and producer of amateur film's aura. Following Cooks and Schwartz, one could conclude that the archive becomes an active *performer* in the "drama of de- and re-auratization of amateur film."

Notes

[1] Terry Cook, Joan M. Schwartz, "Archives, Records, and Power: From (Postmodern) Theory to (Archival) Performance," in *Archival Science*, no. 2, 2002, p. 183.

[2] *Idem*, pp. 172, 182f. See also Tom Nesmith, "Seeing Archives: Postmodernism and the Changing Intellectual Place of Archives," in *American Archivist*, no. 65, 2002, pp. 31ff.

[3] Martina Roepke, *Privat-Vorstellung. Heimkino in Deutschland vor 1945*, Olms, Hildesheim 2006, pp. 13f.

[4] Nico de Klerk, *Home away from Home: Private films from the Dutch East-Indies in the Archive*, in

Karen L. Ishizuka, Patricia R. Zimmermann (eds.), *Mining the Home Movie*, University of California Press, Berkeley 2007.

[5] Devin Orgeron, "Mobile Home Movies. Travel and *le Politique des Amateurs*," in *The Moving Image*, no. 6, Fall 2006, p. 79.

[6] This paper is based on research I did for my master thesis at the *University of Amsterdam* in the programme *Preservation and Presentation of the Moving Image*. It is a shortened version of this master thesis about amateur film and the archive and shows the results of my research. Differing from my master thesis, this paper deals with another case study, taken from the Dutch film and television archive Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision, where I currently work as an archivist for nitrate film. For the full version of my research *Towards a Definition of Amateur Film - Amateur Film, Benjamin's Aura and the Archive* see http://dare.uva.nl/document/107619, last access 20 June 2011.

[7] Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility*, second version [*Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit*, zweite, erweiterte deutsche Fassung, 1936], in Howard Eiland, Michael W. Jennings (eds.), *Walter Benjamin. Selected Writings Volume 3 1935-1938*, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge 2002, p. 103.

[8] *Ibidem*.

[9] Patricia R. Zimmermann, *Reel Families. A Social History of Amateur Film*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington 1995, p. 21. Reversal film was introduced in 1923 simultaneously by Pathé for the 9.5mm and by Kodak for the 16mm amateur film system.

[10] By this, it is possible to reduce the material costs, as extra film for a print is not necessary any more, thus making the system particularly attractive for the amateur film market. In fact, Kodak and Pathé introduced reversal film exclusively for their amateur film gauges so that it became characteristic of amateur film.

[11] *Pierement* (1931) and *Vrijdagavond* (1932).

[12] 16mm at that time; 8mm was introduced in 1932.

[13] In total he shot 4000 meters of nitrate.

[14] Even though a reproduction would generally be possible as film is a reproducible medium.

Thus, I distinguish here between the *possibility* and *actuality* of reproduction that makes the difference. Although the reproduction and commonness of an amateur film is technically more or less possible, its reproduction and commonness is not the rule due to its original family context. This context causes the material uniqueness of an amateur film and makes it an original work. Here, I deviate from Benjamin's concept since he speaks about the *technical reproducibility* – the potentiality of reproduction and commonness that alone already causes the loss of aura.

[15] The tinting and toning colouring techniques had to be applied to the positive print of a film and according to the change in colour (as well as the inserting of inter-titles) the positive had to be spliced together.

[16] Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility*, cit., p. 105.

[17] *Ibidem*.

[18] Since there is no further information about the Teunissen family and their dealing with the films, I analyse the ritual value on a more theoretical, hypothetical level. In addition, I base this analysis on previous research that reveals a connection between amateur film and the ritual.

[19] Schneider calls those activities rituals of expression (*Darstellungsrituale*). Alexandra Schneider, *Die Stars sind wir. Heimkino als filmische Praxis*, Schüren, Marburg 2004, p. 151.

[20] Susan Aasman, *Ritueel van huiselijk geluk*, Het Spinhuis, Amsterdam 2004, p. 142.

[21] Other examples are amateur films as ritual of representation, identification and stabilisation of the family and one's own identity (when shooting and watching a home movie together it is family time and this togetherness strengthens the family and identity of the family members) and amateur films as ritual of cinema and film as a rather medium specific ritual (the family celebrates cinematography by making and screening films in the private sphere).

[22] ("*Tentstokken van de herinnering*") Susan Aasman, *Ritueel van huiselijk geluk*, cit., p. 73.

[23] Benjamin sees such a cult of remembrance concerning early photography. Following him, for the last time the aura was waving from early photographs in the fleeting expression of the human face that contributed to the cult of remembrance of dead or absent loved ones. Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility*, cit., p. 108.

[24] Susan Aasman, *Ritueel van huiselijk geluk*, cit., p. 59.

[25] Schneider speaks of a strengthening (*Verfestigung*) and festivication (*Verfestlichung*) of family films since they record moments (strengthening) and by this they give the events an aura of the special, dramatic and spectacular (festivifation). Alexandra Schneider, *Die Stars sind wir. Heimkino als filmische Praxis*, cit., pp. 98, 116, 228. In this way, Teunissen, his camera and *actors* gave the birthday scenes and the car scene a glamour and importance in the cult of remembrance since they considered it worthy to be recorded and thus to be preserved.

[26] Roepke calls this after Richard Chalfen the *home mode* that is characterised by a close connectedness between the making and showing of a film. Martina Roepke, *Privat-Vorstellung. Heimkino in Deutschland vor 1945*, cit., pp. 22ff. The people recorded and those operating the camera are identical with the later spectators, or at least both groups are connected through a personal relation. Therefore de Klerk stresses, "home movies have participants rather than spectators." See Nico de Klerk, *Home away from Home: Private films from the Dutch East-Indies in the Archive*, cit.

[27] Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility*, cit., p. 106.

[28] *Ibidem.*

[29] *Ibidem.*

[30] Besides this, the restricted exhibition value has another, more medium specific explanation. Unlike a photograph, an amateur film cannot be exhibited continuously. On the contrary, one has to take the film out of its can and transform the living room into a cinema to be able to see the images. Thus, the exhibition is something special, restricted to a particular exhibition time and to a small intimate group of spectators.

Finally, as Benjamin describes regarding the auratic artwork, there is something in the artwork that remains concealed and inaccessible, which puts another layer to the restricted exhibition value. Benjamin speaks of a "distance, however near it may be." See Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility*, cit., pp. 104f. Amateur films are surrounded by a certain distance because there is always something that remains inaccessible and unbridgeable, like pieces of memory that are missing when watching a home movie or the very moment of production that is gone.

[31] Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility*, cit., p. 102.

[32] *Idem*, p. 104.

[33] *Idem*, pp. 105f.

[34] See for example cinema. *Idem*, pp. 116f.

[35] *Idem*, p. 105.

[36] The *Rijksvoorlichtingsdienst* (RVD) is the Dutch governmental press agency.

I couldn't trace the exact date when the collection was given to the archive. The first record I found is from 1973 when a kind of inventory was made of the Teunissen material so that the donation must have taken place sometime before or in 1973.

[37] In the following, I will use the terminology as defined in *The Film Preservation Guide. The Basics for Archives, Libraries, and Museums*, National Film Preservation Foundation, San Francisco 2004, p. 4. In this sense, I will speak of *preservation* as the "full continuum of activities necessary to protect the film and share the content with the public" that is "film handling, duplication, storage, and access." *Conservation* is "the protection of the original film artefact" thus its physical survival mainly by storage as a form of *passive preservation*. *Duplication* on the contrary I consider as a first form of *active preservation* since new copies are made. *Restoration* finally "goes beyond the physical copying of the surviving original materials."

[38] The partner institutions are the Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision, Eye Film Institute Netherlands, the National Archive, Audio Archive Rotterdam, Kennisland and the public libraries organization. For more information see http://www.beeldenvoordetoekomst.nl, last access 20 June 2011.

[39] In fact as Fossati emphasizes, the colour of a new print is never completely identical with the colour of the original and thus strictly speaking cannot be described as restoration. This is why she calls colour restoration colour *simulation*. Giovanna Fossati, *Coloured Images Today: How to Live with Simulated Colours (and Be Happy)*, in Daan Hertogs, Nico de Klerk (eds.), *'Disorderly Order:' Colours in Silent Film*, Nederlands Filmmuseum, Amsterdam 1996, pp. 83ff.

[40] The actual preservation was carried out by the *Haghefilm* restoration laboratory in Amsterdam. For a detailed description of the Desmet method see Mark-Paul Meyer, Paul Read, *Restoration of Motion Picture Film,* Buttenworth, London 2000, pp. 287-290.

[41] And the skills of the *Haghefilm* laboratory.

[42] In addition, the new elements have different characteristics from the original and so they change the film's characteristics. In contrast to Benjamin's indistinguishability between original and copy in the age of technological reproducibility, these prints are not completely identical to the original. For instance, the original nitrate of *John & Dick* has splices as a result of editing together the differently tinted and toned scenes of the film and of inserting inter-titles. In the new copies these splices are gone as well as mechanical damages that could serve as hints to the production and presentation history of the film within the family context. Furthermore, the new elements of *John & Dick* are printed on different film stocks with different characteristics (modern Kodak polyester film stock instead of Kodak nitrate film stock) and the colours in the new positive print are not really tinted and toned any more but *simulated* by using colour filters in the printer and modern colour film stock. Consequently, the new copies lack the characteristics of the original, which give the film its authenticity – or in other words the aura of the original film, which is connected to the very unique combination of all its features.

[43] Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility*, cit., pp. 115f.

[44] In fact, the term restoration is not appropriate and quite misleading in this case since the final product of the project was a new compilation, an entirely new film with new montage that had never existed in this form before. However, I have not changed the terminology but put the term restoration in italics since at the time the project was called a restoration project by RVD curator Ruud van der Kleij and film historian Egbert Barten who carried out the project.

[45] Besides the preservation elements for long time storage: a duplicate positive master and duplicate negative from this.

[46] Besides this, exhibition value and accessibility also form a reason for preservation. The motivation for making the compilation *Teunissen & Relatives* was for example that Teunissen's films gave a

clear impression of how a very rich family lived in the 1920's. (This was as well the motivation for preserving the tinted and toned prints of *John & Dick* last year, plus the fact that they are an example of a rather unusual amateur film – on 35mm nitrate with beautiful tinting and toning, which add a certain degree of dramaturgy to the film). The Teunissen films were thus considered worth and interesting to keep – in view of a bigger audience, as part of the Dutch audiovisual heritage – and thus preserved. This means that the preservation advice – or preservation value – included a certain exhibition value of these films, in the way that they were considered interesting and valuable for the Dutch people, going beyond the value for the Teunissen family. (This value of an amateur film in the archive differs from its original value in the family context since the latter is a cult value and therefore completely different from the exhibition value of the archive. A film which is most valuable for a family can be less interesting for the archive or interesting for different reasons. What makes the Teunissen films a very interesting example here is the fact of Teunissen's awkward position during World War II. In the context of the archive, or the non-family context, these amateur films get a new immaterial veil, which contains Teunissen's behaviour during the war, collaborating with Nazi Germany). Therefore, the increased exhibition value is both result and reason of preservation.

[47] Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility*, cit., p. 105.

[48] Jacques Derrida, *Archival Fever (transcribed seminar)*, in C. Hamilton et al. (eds.), *Refiguring the Archive*, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht 2002, p. 68. Derrida explains this with regard to memory. He argues that in keeping something safe, the archive produces not only memory but also forgetting because by putting something in a safe, we know that it is saved, know where to find it again and so we can forget it and go on. Consequently, keeping is to be able to forget and the trace in the archive (the record) is at the same time memory and the erasure of memory forgetting. See *Idem*, p. 54. In this sense, archiving becomes an act of forgetting and Derrida speaks of "a perverse desire for forgetting in the archive," which is the desire for the destruction of memory. See *Idem*, p. 68.

[49] *Idem*, p. 44.

[50] Aasman speaks of an archival impulse concerning amateur film and refers to Mary Ann Doane who says that cinema appeared in a time of a strong archival impulse. Susan Aasman, *Ritueel van huiselijk geluk*, cit., p. 49.

[51] Jacques Derrida, *Archival Fever (transcribed seminar)*, cit., p. 54.

[52] *Idem*, p. 42ff.

[53] "*Uitgangsmateriaal.*"

[54] "*Veiligstelling.*"

[55] In the past due to the restricted access to the original nitrate films, these films were not visible in the database catalogue for customers. The policy was only to show copies of the films in the catalogue.

[56] Regardless of whether duplications have been made or not.

[57] This is his particular way of filming. In addition, scratches on the filmstrip and in the screened moving images can be a trace or rest of the use and production by the family.

[58] "*Re-territorialisierung der Kopie.*" See Boris Groys, "Die Topologie der Aura. Über Original, Kopie und einen berühmten Begriff Walter Benjamins," in *Neue Rundschau*, no. 113, 4, 2002, p. 88.

[59] *Idem*, p. 86. In addition, the "topological defined movement of the recipient" [*my translation*] (*die topologisch definierte Bewegung des Betrachters*) decides whether a work is an original or a copy: If he has to go to the work, it is an original (bound to a place), if the work comes to the recipient, it is a (placeless) copy. See *Idem*, p. 87.

[60] "*(Re)Originalisierung*", *Idem*, p. 90.

[61] "*Reauratisierung*", *Idem*, p. 94.

[62] *Idem*, p. 89.

[63] Jacques Derrida, *Archival Fever (transcribed seminar)*, cit., p. 42.

[64] Other examples are the ritual of collecting or the celebration of cinematography.

[65] In the end, this celebration of the material and cult of the original goes beyond amateur film, including in fact all film in the archive. The material is honoured in terms of storage (protection of materials as unique artefacts, fighting against decay and striving for eternity value), identification (exact examination of prints and describing them in the database with their particular characteristics) and to a certain degree also in the presentation of films.

[66] In the end, Benjamin also describes in his artwork essay a certain potential that lies in the destruction of aura, making the emergence of something new possible. Concerning film this is for him the political film. As Bolter, MacIntyre, Gandy and Schweitzer write: "[…] in fact Benjamin does not take the position that the decay of aura is culturally bad. On the contrary, he believes that the *Verfall* of aura makes possible a new political cinema." See Jay David Bolter et al., "New Media and the Permanent Crisis of Aura," in *Convergence*, no. 12, 1 2006, p. 25.

[67] Jacques Derrida, *Archival Fever (transcribed seminar)*, cit., p. 54.

[68] Consequently, there is a circular movement of destruction and production of the aura of amateur film in the archive, a dynamic and complicated play of *de-auratization* and *re-auratization* that Groys describes as symptomatic of the modern age. See Boris Groys, "Die Topologie der Aura. Über Original, Kopie und einen berühmten Begriff Walter Benjamins," cit., p. 94. In addition, this complicated play becomes more complex by the circumstance that the *aura of the archive* is not exclusively bound to amateur film but includes professional film as well so that there is a dynamic circulation of aura also between amateur film and professional film. In the end, the phenomenon of aura itself becomes exchangeable and (re)producible in the archive, although the reproduced aura is never identical with the original one, which for the most part is irrevocably lost.

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Pour une archéologie des techniques cinématographiques : l'exemple du Kinemacolor

Histoire technique du cinéma et archive ne cessent de se poser problème. D'abord d'un point de vue concret : ce qui constitue une archive pour l'historien des techniques cinématographiques n'est sans doute pas exactement la même chose que ce qui fait archive pour l'historien « général ». Et même lorsque les objets sont communs – les films, par exemple –, le regard sur eux n'est pas forcément similaire. Dans l'introduction de sa thèse consacrée à « la conquête de l'instantané », l'historien de la photographie André Gunthert écrit :

> *Produit de la technique, toute image photographique contient un ensemble d'informations sur les modalités opératoires qui ont présidé à sa réalisation : document iconique offert à une lecture d'ordre esthétique, elle constitue aussi un monument technologique susceptible de faire l'objet d'un questionnement de type archéologique.*[1]

Cet « aussi » renvoie à un basculement par lequel l'attention au technologique, à ses traces dans l'image, opère une transformation du regard qui fait passer de fait au niveau archéologique. Mais ce passage implique la prise en compte d'éléments non verbaux : images, appareils, schémas, graphiques, etc. Si Pierre Francastel a bien montré, dans « Valeurs socio-psychologiques de l'espace-temps figuratif »,[2] l'importance de ces sources non verbales, elles n'en posent pas moins des problèmes méthodologiques dans le cadre d'une archéologie : comment (et de quoi) peuvent-elles faire archive ? Ce sont des questionnements de ce type qui amenèrent Michel Foucault à passer d'une archéologie basée sur les discours, à une épistémologie prenant en compte les dispositifs. Je voudrais donner un exemple illustrant ces problématiques sur un objet concret, déjà évoqué parfois d'ailleurs par des archivistes : le premier procédé cinématographique en couleurs naturelles exploité commercialement, le Kinemacolor.[3]

Le Kinemacolor fut inventé en 1906 en Angleterre par George Albert Smith – un des cinéastes et producteurs les plus importants des tout débuts du cinéma britannique –, et exploité par Charles Urban jusqu'en 1915. Il eut sa première séance publique payante au Palace Theatre de Londres le 26 février 1909, et les années qui suivirent furent couronnées d'un succès international – succès auquel contribuèrent notablement, comme le rappela Luke McKernan,[4] les cérémonies royales de funérailles d'Edward VII et d'intronisation de George V, entre 1910 et 1912, dont le Kinemacolor était seul à pouvoir rendre le faste coloré.

Notamment, le *Delhi Durbar*, cérémonie indienne reconnaissant le nouveau roi britannique empereur d'Inde, filmée en Kinemacolor en décembre 1911 et présentée pour la première fois au Scala Theatre de Londres le 2 février 1912, fut un triomphe inouï, exporté aussi bien aux Etats-Unis qu'en France et ailleurs, « sans doute le plus grand succès enregistré par les images animées, tous lieux et époques confondus » selon le magazine corporatiste américain *Moving Picture World*.[5] Le spectacle durait pourtant deux heures et demi (attractions comprises), et la place coûtait notablement plus cher que d'usage. Ce spectacle valut la célébrité à Urban, et les faveurs de la Couronne.[6]

George Albert Smith décrivit ainsi, dans le brevet anglais de 1906, les étapes de son procédé :

> *1. Un tableau animé d'une scène colorée est pris avec une caméra de bioscope de la manière ordinaire, excepté que l'obturateur tournant est utilisé muni de filtres colorés vert et rouge convenablement ajustés. Un négatif est ainsi obtenu dans lequel les rouges et les jaunes sont enregistrés dans une image, et les verts et les jaunes (avec un peu de bleu) dans la suivante, et ainsi de suite alternativement sur toute la longueur du film de bioscope.*
>
> *2. Un tableau positif est tiré du négatif susmentionné et projeté par une machine de projection de bioscope ordinaire qui, toutefois, est munie d'un obturateur tournant pourvu de verres colorés à peu près similaires aux susmentionnés, et arrangé de telle manière que les images correspondant au vert et au rouge soient projetées alternativement à travers leurs filtres colorés appropriés.*
>
> *3. Si la vitesse de projection est d'approximativement 30 images par seconde, les deux sélections colorées fusionnent et présentent à l'œil un rendu satisfaisant du sujet en couleurs qui apparaissent comme étant naturelles.*
>
> *La nouveauté de ma méthode tient à l'usage de 2 couleurs seulement, rouge et vert, combiné au principe de persistance de la vision.*[7]

Ainsi, le Kinemacolor implique à la fois un appareillage spécifique à la prise de vue et en projection : obturateur tournant pourvu de filtres colorés rouge et vert, et doublement de la cadence de défilement. Ces conditions vont avoir des conséquences : les filtres absorbant beaucoup de lumière, le tournage réclamera des conditions de luminosité très forte, et les images souffriront en projection d'une faible luminosité sur l'écran. Le film Kinemacolor, lui, se présente comme un film noir et blanc ordinaire, même s'il a dû être « panchromatisé », c'est-à-dire subir un traitement chimique le rendant sensible au rouge, ce qui n'est pas a priori le cas des émulsions à l'époque. Il faut souligner ici qu'il n'y a donc, avec le Kinemacolor, *aucune couleur sur le support.* Cette constatation amènera Colin N. Bennett en 1913 à une réflexion intéressante :

> *Dans le cas du Kinemacolor, donc, on fait subir au membre du public de bonne volonté non pas une, mais deux illusions complètes et séparées, car tandis que l'exhibiteur en noir et blanc vous fait seulement croire que vous voyez un mouvement qui n'est pas là, l'opérateur de Kinemacolor fait la même chose pour la couleur aussi.*[8]

Du point de vue des archives, le Kinemacolor pose donc des problèmes spécifiques. Si les films peuvent être conservés et dupliqués de la même manière exactement que les films nitrate « classiques », cette étape n'aboutit en fait pas à un élément projetable, ne permet pas de retrouver quoi que ce soit de l'expérience cinématographique originale. Le film ne peut exister que conjugué avec l'appareil de projection *ad hoc*. Archiver le Kinemacolor, c'est donc conserver et restaurer des films, mais aussi des machines, des manuels d'instructions, etc. – sachant que bien sûr, la nécessité de conserver les machines empêchera *a priori* qu'on les fasse fonctionner. On peut tenter de reconstituer le dispositif sur des projecteurs modernes – ce qu'ont fait par exemple Brian Pritchard et David Cleveland en 2008, ou le festival Cinema Ritrovato à Bologne –, mais d'abord c'est une opération complexe, réalisable seulement ponctuellement. Ensuite les différences de composition des gélatines colorées, de puissance lumineuse des lampes, de conception des moteurs (la projection à 32 images par seconde avait détruit le projecteur lors de la reconstruction du Kinemacolor au festival Cinema Ritrovato), etc., font que l'on n'a aucun moyen de garantir un quelconque niveau de fidélité à l'original.

L'autre méthode de restauration consiste à tirer ces films sur un support couleur « moderne » – une pellicule de type Eastmancolor, ou un fichier numérique. On transforme alors radicalement l'expérience visuelle singulière qu'était le dispositif de base. De plus, le passage d'un support à l'autre ne peut pas être une opération neutre, et se trouve le moment d'une série de choix des restaurateurs, qui vont devoir s'interroger sur les corrections à apporter – ou non – au résultat.

Ainsi par exemple, Nicola Mazzanti, chargé de la restauration de films Kinemacolor pour l'Immagine Ritrovata, rappelait que « les opérateurs de Kinemacolor devaient choisir entre différents filtres en fonction du sujet ». (Notons que le terme « filtre » n'était pas en usage à l'époque, les textes parlant d'*écrans* colorés.) En fait, d'après le manuel édité par la compagnie en 1910, deux jeux de filtres étaient disponibles, l'un moins dense que l'autre en cas de conditions lumineuses quelque peu défavorables. Les restaurateurs décidèrent de corriger à l'étalonnage les variations de teintes constatées « pour obtenir le résultat que Kinemacolor voulait obtenir, le meilleur, le plus naturel ». Il ajoute :

> *Bien sûr, l'ajustement que nous avons réalisé à l'étape du tirage n'aurait pas eu son équivalent à l'époque originale du Kinemacolor, parce que même si l'opérateur pouvait varier ses filtres […], le système de projection n'aurait été équipé que d'un jeu de filtres.*[9]

Certains aspects importants sont en jeu ici. L'équivalence supposée par Mazzanti entre « ce que voulait obtenir Kinemacolor », « le meilleur résultat », et « le résultat le plus naturel », et qui l'amène à corriger le tirage d'une certaine manière, est en fait idéologique, basée sur une certaine idée du procédé. Cette conception s'appuie clairement sur le discours de la « Natural Colour Kinematograph Company », mais le fait même que la compagnie autorise ses opérateurs à des changements de filtres qui ne peuvent qu'impliquer des distorsions de rendu coloré complexifie nettement cette position. Cette décision rend tout à fait possible que les opérateurs décident de changer de filtre pour obtenir un *effet* lié au sujet et qui ne vise pas strictement le *naturel*… D'autant que bien sûr, aucune opération d'« étalonnage » ne permet encore d'homogénéiser le rendu coloré ; il y aura donc ruptures, « faux raccords », dans le rendu coloré dès qu'un opérateur change de filtre, ce dont il aura parfaitement conscience.

Le Kinemacolor ainsi restauré est une très riche source d'informations, ne serait-ce que par les films dont les sujets, la forme, éventuellement le rapport à la couleur, sont rendus visibles. Mais le procédé devient un dispositif hybride, qui ne pourra pas être confronté aux textes commentant les projections de Kinemacolor à l'époque, puisque ceux-ci décrivent des effets ou défauts du procédé qui auront subi des transformations ou corrections, dont on ne peut mesurer exactement l'ampleur.

Ainsi, ce dont les discours qui nous sont parvenus sur le Kinemacolor sont l'archive, n'est pas exactement la même chose que ce dont les films – éventuellement restaurés – ou les machines sont l'archive. Archiver un procédé, un moment de l'histoire technique du cinéma, c'est archiver peut-être une certaine expérience visuelle, un mode de perception singulier. Le Kinemacolor est aujourd'hui impossible à *voir* : il tient radicalement à un certain état des techniques, hors duquel il n'a plus d'existence possible. L'expérience en est impossible à reproduire. Mais par là même, toute description de l'effet du procédé sur les spectateurs à l'époque nous renseigne en retour de manière précieuse précisément sur cet état des techniques, ce moment de la perception cinématographique. Les traces qui subsistent – films, machines, textes – décrivent un agencement qu'il faut nommer Kinemacolor, mais qui a perdu sa cohérence comme expérience unique. Seule une archéologie peut permettre d'en rendre compte, à la fois dans sa cohésion originale et sa dispersion comme objet historique multiple.

Cette archéologie permettra autre chose encore. Le procédé Kinemacolor est un objet technique assez passionnant, dont l'intérêt n'est pas simplement historique. Sur ce dernier point en effet, les histoires techniques traditionnelles ne s'intéressent guère au procédé que pour en analyser l'échec final, donc les défauts qui auront pu au moins partiellement l'expliquer. Le Kinemacolor est d'emblée présenté comme un pas dans la mauvaise direction, l'un des nombreux procédés qui se sont essayés à la cinématographie en couleurs naturelles par la manière additive. Dans cette perspective, le moment crucial est celui où Herbert T. Kalmus, fondateur de la compagnie Technicolor, comprend enfin, en 1917 (selon ses dires), que la solution ne pouvait être qu'un procédé soustractif, c'est-à-dire que les couleurs devaient être présentes sur le support même, afin que le film puisse être projeté de manière « normale ». Le Kinemacolor aura été simplement un peu plus loin que les autres procédés additifs, jusqu'à une exploitation commerciale dont on minimise l'importance. On ne se demande pas, par exemple, pourquoi les chercheurs privilégiaient alors la synthèse additive, question épistémologique tout à fait intéressante.

Mais on n'y développe guère, non plus, les implications théoriques des spécificités du procédé. Pour rappeler le brevet de George Albert Smith, elles tiennent à deux éléments : « l'usage de 2 couleurs seulement, rouge et vert, combiné au principe de persistance de la vision ».[10] Le Kinemacolor est donc bichrome, ce qui va déjà avoir des implications importantes. Notamment, les textes d'époque discutant la validité de cette bichromie – en fonction des images qu'ils en auront vues – voient se déployer un discours où les questions du réalisme et de l'indicialité vont se trouver en opposition. Eirik Frisvold Hanssen développe quelque peu ces aspect dans sa thèse *Early Discourses on Colour & Cinema*,[11] où il évoque à plusieurs reprises le Kinemacolor sur la base notamment du catalogue de films de 1912, mais ne s'intéresse pas à l'aspect technique du procédé.

L'autre spécificité du dispositif est également passionnante. Le Kinemacolor projette en fait successivement, à cadence élevée, une image rouge puis une image verte. George Albert Smith compte sur le même principe perceptif, la « persistance de la vision », pour réaliser *à la fois et en même temps* la synthèse de la couleur et la synthèse du mouvement. Ici, l'intervalle entre deux photogrammes supporte simultanément une information de mouvement et une information de couleur. Mouvement et couleur sont de fait rendus équivalents, si l'on peut dire, par le procédé – équivalence que Colin N. Bennett avait déjà suggérée dans la citation que j'ai donnée. Et ils sont tous deux considérés comme relevant potentiellement du même phénomène de perception fondamental, la « persistance rétinienne », supposée capable des deux opérations.

Le principe du Kinemacolor implique donc que la synthèse et l'analyse des couleurs s'opère, en projection et en prise de vues, à partir de deux sélections colorées *successives*.

Pour que la fusion s'effectue, il est crucial que les deux images des « sensations colorées », selon une expression de l'époque, se superposent parfaitement.

La première limite à ce « parfaitement » est celle de la précision mécanique des caméras et projecteurs : le moindre défaut de fixité, c'est-à-dire le moindre décalage de position sur la pellicule entre un photogramme et le suivant, engendrera un décalage sur l'écran entre l'image rouge et l'image verte, et donc, comme l'écrit le compte rendu de la séance inaugurale au Palace Theatre dans le magazine corporatiste anglais *The Bioscope* en 1909, « il y a des flashes aveuglant de vert ou de rouge à travers toute l'image ».[12] Cela revient, et la comparaison est systématique dans les commentaires d'époque, au « mauvais repérage » des imprimeurs, c'est-à-dire au manque de coïncidence entre les couches colorées : les couleurs débordent. Sur le matériel cinématographique, la fixité est directement proportionnelle à la qualité mécanique, donc au prix, des machines ; c'est, entre autres raisons, pourquoi le catalogue de matériel Kinemacolor de 1910 se place résolument dans le « haut de gamme ».

Ainsi, le procédé Kinemacolor – sa viabilité même, mais aussi la fréquence à laquelle ses « défauts » ont été relevés dans les discours –, nous renseigne en retour, aujourd'hui, sur un état des techniques autour de 1910 qui renvoie à un moment de l'histoire de la perception cinématographique – plus ou moins grande fixité, tressautements, clignotement, plaintes de fatigue oculaire, etc. Cela nous renseigne finalement sur ce que *voyaient* les spectateurs au cinéma en 1910 – ou la manière dont ils le voyaient.

La deuxième limite à la perfection de la superposition est radicale, indépassable. Les deux sélections colorées étant successives, elles sont de fait décalées dans le temps de la prise de vues. Donc, tout objet en mouvement n'aura pas exactement la même position à l'image entre la sélection verte et la rouge – ce que l'on nomme, dans la littérature technique sur le sujet, la « parallaxe temporelle ». Ainsi, écrit Jacques Ducom en 1913 :

> *Lorsque l'on enregistre des mouvements rapides, les deux images du couple coloré du Kinemacolor peuvent être suffisamment dissemblables, pour que sur l'écran toutes les parties de ces images ne se superposent pas complètement. Une partie de l'image projetée : un bras, une jambe, une voiture, par exemple, peuvent montrer des dominantes soit rouges, soit vertes.*[13]

« La projection des objets en mouvement », écrit quant à lui John B. Rathburn en 1914, « produit un clignotement désagréable » ;[14] selon l'« opérateur cinégraphiste » Chevreau dans *La Cinématographie française. Technique et matériel* en 1936, « la projection [en] était gâchée » ;[15] ou comme le résumera avec dédain Herbert Kalmus en 1938, « rien de plus naturel alors pour un cheval que d'avoir deux queues, une rouge et une verte ».[16]

Ces franges colorées sont le défaut majeur du Kinemacolor, « caractéristique gênante » que, note l'Anglais Frederick A. Talbot en 1912, « l'observateur le moins initié ne peut manquer de voir », « qui a provoqué de considérables commentaires », et qui, « bien que souvent seulement momentanée, n'en reste pas moins pénible ».[17]

Ces franges sont bien entendu, pour l'entrepreneur Charles Urban, un inconvénient important. Elles font aussi du Kinemacolor, d'un autre point de vue, un véritable dispositif expérimental. Ce que matérialisent fugacement ces franges, c'est l'écart de position d'un corps en mouvement entre deux photogrammes cinématographiques, c'est finalement, pour reprendre l'expression de Dziga Vertov, l'*intervalle de mouvement. Ces* franges montrent, *en couleurs*, la *quantité de mouvement* séparant, au cinéma, deux images – et encore, elles le montrent à trente-deux images par seconde, ce qui le rend moindre qu'à la vitesse usuelle alors de seize, aujourd'hui de vingt-quatre images par seconde. Ces franges colorées font voir ce qui, dans le dispositif cinématographique, menace sans cesse de faire se disloquer l'*image-mouvement* : la présence, par en dessous, d'une série d'images fixes clignotantes… Et le procédé montre que même pour « l'observateur le moins initié », l'intervalle de mouvement n'est pas vraiment une abstraction, qu'il est *sensible.*

C'est exactement ce que, plus tard, a cherché à exposer un artiste comme Paul Sharits, notamment dans une installation créée en 1975, *Shutter Interface*, où quatre projecteurs projettent simultanément des boucles colorées de longueurs différentes, les images se superposant partiellement à l'écran. Les incessants clignotements colorés et transformations de teinte – par synthèse additive – doivent, pour Sharits, faire *voir* au spectateur l'activité de l'obturateur – *Shutter* –, faire voir ce qui se passe dans l'intervalle entre les images, et faire voir qu'on le voit. C'est déjà ce qu'accomplit le Kinemacolor.

Dans le cadre d'une histoire technique classique du cinéma, centrée sur les progrès vers l'apparition de la couleur, le Kinemacolor ne peut avoir droit qu'à une « note de base de page », comme l'écrivait Gorham Kindem. Une archéologie des techniques, au contraire, doit permettre d'en repérer les singularités réelles, dans une perspective non linéaire. Le Kinemacolor s'y découvre un ensemble complexe, articulant des machines, des pratiques, des discours, des films, et finalement un mode de perception singulier, dont l'unicité radicale doit être retrouvée. Chaque machine, chaque technique cinématographique, installation d'artiste ou machinerie industrielle, doit être considérée comme un dispositif autonome, produisant une forme spécifique de mouvement, et une forme spécifique de vision. Chaque technique singulière est l'archive irremplaçable d'un moment de l'histoire de la vision, dont il s'agit de retrouver – y compris à l'intérieur même de l'histoire du cinéma – la foisonnante hétérogénéité, les profondes discontinuités.

Notes

[1] André Gunthert, *La Conquête de l'instantané. Archéologie de l'imaginaire photographique en France (1841-1895)*, Thèse de doctorat (dir. H. Damisch), EHESS, Paris 1999, p. 12.

[2] Pierre Francastel, *Valeurs socio-psychologiques de l'espace-temps figuratif*, dans *L'Année sociologique*, 1963, repris dans *L'Image, la vision et l'imagination. L'objet filmique et l'objet plastique*, texte établi par Galienne Francastel, Denoël, coll. Médiations, Paris 1983, pp. 89-154.

[3] Je maintiens ici l'orthographe originale, même si le nom du procédé fut francisé à l'époque en *Kinémacolor*.

[4] Luke McKernan, *« Something More Than A Mere Picture Show » : Charles Urban and the Early Non Fiction Film in Great Britain and America, 1897-1925*, PhD. diss., Birbeck College / University of London, London 2003, pp. 135 sqq. ; Luke McKernan, « 'The Modern Elixir of Life' : Kinemacolor, Royalty and the Delhi Durbar », dans *Film History*, vol. 21, n° 2, 2009, pp. 122-136.

[5] « [P]robably the greatest success that moving pictures have scored at any time or place », Eirik Frisvold Hanssen, « The Durbar in Kinemacolor », dans *Moving Picture World*, March 2, 1912, p. 774, cité dans Eirik Frisvold Hanssen, *Early Discourses on Colour & Cinema : Origins, Functions, Meanings*, Stockholm University Press, Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis / Stockholm Cinema Studies, Stockholm 2006, p. 45 (c'est moi qui traduis).

[6] Sur le procédé et son histoire, on pourra consulter notamment les travaux de Luke McKernan déjà cités, ainsi que D.B. Thomas, *The First Colour Motion Pictures*, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, A Science Museum Monograph, London 1969 ; Gorham Kindem, « The Demise of Kinemacolor : Technological, Legal, Economic, and Aesthetic Problems in Early Color Cinema History », dans *Cinema Journal*, vol. 20, n° 2, 1981, pp. 3-14.

[7] George Albert Smith, *Improvement in & relating to Kinematograph Apparatus for the Production of Coloured Pictures*, Brevet anglais n° 26. 671, demandé le 24 novembre 1906, accordé le 25 juillet 1907, et révoqué le 26 avril 1915, p. 1 (c'est moi qui traduis). Cf. également, le brevet américain n° 941. 960, demandé le 11 juin 1907, et accordé le 30 novembre 1909.

[8] Colin N. Bennett et al., *The Handbook of Kinematograhy : The History, Theory, and Practice of Motion Photography and Projection*, dans *The Kinematograph Weekly*, London 1913, p. 303 (c'est moi qui traduis).

[9] Nicola Mazzanti, *Raising the Colours (Restoring Kinemacolor)*, dans Roger Smither, Catherine A.

Surowiec (sous la dir. de), *This Film Is Dangerous : A Celebration of Nitrate Films*, FIAF, Bruxelles 2002, pp. 123-125 (c'est moi qui traduis).

[10] George Albert Smith, *Improvement in & relating to Kinematograph Apparatus for the Production of Coloured Pictures*, cit., p. 1 (c'est moi qui traduis).

[11] Eirik Frisvold Hanssen, *Early Discourses on Colour & Cinema : Origins, Functions, Meanings*, cit.

[12] [S.n.], « The Kinemacolor Pictures », dans *The Bioscope*, March 4, 1909, p. 23.

[13] Jacques Ducom, « Les Procédés de cinématographie en couleurs naturelles. Le Kinémacolor et le nouvel appareil des établissements Gaumont », dans *L'Industrie cinématographique*, 2e année, n° 3, 15 janvier 1913, p. 73.

[14] John B. Rathburn, *Motion Picture Making and Exhibiting*, Charles C. Thompson, Chicago 1914, p. 219 (c'est moi qui traduis).

[15] Chevreau, opérateur cinégraphiste, « La Couleur. Résumé par un praticien. Quel est le procédé qui conviendra au marché français ? », dans *La Cinématographie française. Technique et matériel*, n° 939, 31 octobre 1936, p. 1.

[16] Herbert T. Kalmus, « Technicolor Adventures in Cinemaland », dans *Journal of the Society of Motion Pictures Engineers*, vol. 31, décembre 1938, repris dans Raymond Fielding (sous la dir. de), *A Technological History of Motion Pictures and Television : An Anthology from the Pages of the Journal of the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers*, University of California Press, Berkeley-Los Angeles 1967, p. 52 (c'est moi qui traduis).

[17] Frederick A. Talbot, *Moving Pictures : How They Are Made and Worked*, William Heinemann, coll. Conquests of Science, London 1912, p. 298 (c'est moi qui traduis).

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Capturing Imagination: Cinema's Future Anterior

This paper will touch upon the notion of the archive more in terms of theoretical inspiration than in terms of an object of theoretical reflection, an inspiration to think about the cinematic image as well as imagination and their temporalities. What follows will be a thought experiment on the topic of imagination in cinema, which draws on a personal experience of visiting the Albert Kahn "Archives of the Planet" where I stumbled upon a compelling photograph taken in Paris in 14 May, 1918.

The photograph shows the front of the movie theatre Grand Cinéma *Plaisir*, which was situated on Rue de la Roquette in the 11th arrondissement. The exposure time of the autochrome colour film technology, created by Auguste and Louis Lumière, which Kahn used for his photographic archive of the world was rather long; consequently, everything that did not stay still became blurred or even invisible. For instance, this city street scene might have actually been a lot busier than it appears in the picture. Yet it is not this absence of movement that "pricked" me in this photograph. Rather, what caught my attention here is the trace that the boy in knee pants and wearing a grey cap left when walking down Rue de la Roquette, slowing down a bit and finally stopping so as to gaze at the movie posters advertising is a rerun of *Zigomar* crime films directed by Victorin Jasset between 1911-13. Something in this blurry trace of movement that halts in front of the poster raised my curiosity.

That is because the photograph (quite accidentally, I assume) displays a particularly captivating moment at which the boy's field of consciousness became suddenly occupied, not by the everyday and the ordinary, but by the anticipation and promise of an alternative world of fiction and fantasy where agile detectives and even more agile criminals relentlessly chase one another. The poster was able to direct the boy's mind towards flames that blaze in the background as a group of policemen stands among what look like dead female bodies; towards a plain clothes officer holding a dubious looking bearded man that must be the criminal mastermind Zigomar, in whose person, as Richard Abel notes, Jasset's films elevated the villain to a status equal to, if not surpassing, that of the detective, as a cynical emblem of a capitalist entrepreneur that is clever, reckless, malleable in identity and appearance, and utterly immoral in his lust for money.[1] So the photograph bears the trace of a moment at which the movie poster captured the boy's imagination as a promise of an alternative world of fiction and action, and started to embody an ontological cut between here and there in perception, between what is and what might be, between the present and a possible future.

Of course, we don't know if the boy ever went to see the film(s). Yet nonetheless, the photograph compels us to associate it with the childhood memories of cinema that Jean-Paul Sartre reminisced about in his autobiographical novel *The Words* (*Les Mots*), recalling how when he was of around the age of five – in the early 1910s, that is – his mother used to take him regularly to the movies to see films like *Zigomar*, *Fantômas* (1913-14), *Maciste* (1915) and *The Exploits of Elaine* (1914). I take a rather long quote from the novel in which Sartre muses as follows:

> *Above all, I liked the incurable muteness of my heroes. But no, they weren't mute, since they knew how to make themselves understood. We communicated by means of music; it was the sound of their inner life. Persecuted innocence did better than merely show or speak of suffering: it permeated me with its pain by means of the melody that issued from it. I would read the conversations, but I heard the hope and bitterness; I would perceive by ear the proud grief that remains silent. I was compromised; the young widow who wept on the screen was not I, and yet she and I had only one soul: Chopin's funeral march; no more was needed for her tears to wet my eyes. I felt I was a prophet without being able to foresee anything: even before the traitor betrayed, his crime entered me; when all seemed peaceful in the castle, sinister chords exposed the murderer's presence. How happy were those cowboys, those musketeers, those detectives: their future was there, in that premonitory music, and governed the present.*[2]

So Sartre describes how, after entering the movie theatre and seeing moving images unfold on the silver screen and, most importantly here, hearing the music accompanying the images, he became affectively immersed, or engulfed, in the cinema's imaginary worlds. The stress is indeed on the notions of "imaginary" and "imagination" – the capacity of the human mind to not to confine itself to what appears to it as factual reality, but to imagine itself in other situations, in other persons' shoes, in other worlds.

What is this capacity, more precisely? We could seek an answer from Sartre's book on imagination, *The Imaginary* (*L'Imaginaire*), which was published by Gallimard about 35 years after these childhood experiences, in 1940. In that book, Sartre sharply differentiated imagination from perception: while perception obeys the rule of reality, imagination in contrast is something that by definition stands against reality. According to the philosopher, perception is confined to the here-and-now of being. In perception, an object is taken as real and as present. In perception, we are "squashed" in the world and "transfixed" by the real. Imagination instead, Sartre asserted, "posits its object as a nothingness."[3] This means that, in imagination, the object is never assumed to be present. Surely, an imagined object can be assumed to exist elsewhere or in some other time but not here and now. Sartre argued that, "However lively, appealing, strong the image, it gives its object as not being."[4] When imagining a being, an event, a situation, or anything, we do indeed posit something but in such a way that this something is nothingness in relation to the actual world.

Without going into details of Sartre's analysis, I would just like to point out the anthropological significance that Sartre assigns to imagination in this early book. He argues that imagination is not just an "empirical power added to consciousness" but it is rather "the whole of consciousness as it realizes its freedom."[5] Sartre regards imagination as the capacity that has the power to suspend perception and let us surpass reality as it exists here and now; a capacity that makes it possible for us to "nihilate" reality, and by nihilating reality, to posit worlds that only exist in potentiality. Imagination, in other words, is the capacity that lets consciousness transcend the present and occupy a world that does not exist now but might exist. So human freedom and indeed human consciousness, according to Sartre, are predicated on nothingness in the sense of something that is not.

It appears that the film poster in front of which the boy is compelled to stop indeed embodies a suspension of perception of a similar kind and force, appealing consciousness to realize its fundamental freedom. For the boy, one might surmise, the poster anticipates the reality of a possible world. It is a surface that invites consciousness to surpass the world towards the imaginary of cinema where policemen commit most heroic gestures in capturing malicious villains and where innocence is threatened becoming devoured by flames. In this sense, indeed, the poster performs an ontological cut on the verge of nothingness, which transports the subject from the crushing here-and-now to another world: a world that is not but that one imagines as present and one's own. The poster triggers the imagination, which evokes the reality of cinema's imaginary.

Imagination in this sense is the capacity to "fabulate," to create, to fictionalize, in short, to evoke something – for instance, feelings, events, situations, stories – that is not but could be. What happens to this capacity when the subject enters the movie theatre? Sartre's description of his childhood movie experiences vividly portrays how the cinematic apparatus came to capture the imagination in a particular way. I am using the notion of "apparatus" here (following Giorgio Agamben) in the sense of a technology that creates a specific kind of psychic economy where our behaviours, gestures and imaginations become oriented, shaped and modulated.[6]

As for the psychic economy of cinema in the early 1910s, Sartre stressed the role of sound in particular when he wrote that, "the young widow who wept on the screen was not I, and yet she and I had only one soul: Chopin's funeral march; no more was needed for her tears to wet my eyes." Here music comes to mediate the process of what could be called "affect attunement," referring to experiences in which two individuals can occupy the same psychic universe despite housing two separate bodies.

In psychology, affect attunement signals a dimension of experience in which, through the cross-modal communication of gestures, vocal intonations, bodily rhythms and intensities, eye movements, and so on, there is a match of internal states and a sense of emotional connectedness between two or more individuals.[7] The question is not simply about imitating the others' behavior externally but about incorporating and sharing the same affect state, the same inner universe.

Psychoanalyst Arnold Modell sees affect attunement as underlying the work of imagination and the both unconscious and conscious processes of metaphoric figuration, which are capable of transferring meaning between dissimilar domains as well as transforming meaning by means of novel recombinations, generating thus new perceptions.[8] Imagination twists the world, and while twisting it, creates and configures it.

In Sartre's description, the psychic economy of cinema draws on affect attunement, based on the transfer of feelings from the screen to the spectator's body and the imagination of what happens in the mind of the other. But furthermore, there is a layer of temporal complexity that Sartre ascribes to the work of imagination in this context, in the sense of an uncanny intuition that the spectator has of what will have happened in the future:

> *I felt I was a prophet without being able to foresee anything: even before the traitor betrayed, his crime entered me. […] How happy were those cowboys, those musketeers, those detectives: their future was there, in that premonitory music, and governed the present.*[9]

The film viewer, Sartre asserts, cannot foresee anything, because in order for one to be able to foresee something, the future needs to be indefinite and indeterminate.

Imagination, as noted earlier, normally takes up this function of picturing the what-may-come. However, in cinema, according to Sartre, this indefinite future has been translated into the future perfect. "Even before the traitor betrayed, his crime entered me," Sartre wrote, implying how in the cinema, the future actually comes to "govern the present." What the philosopher hence has in mind here is not simply a sign that lets us anticipate what is to come next in the film's narrative, for instance, an indexical sign like smoke that lets one predict fire.

Rather, what he is gesturing towards is a quite particular kind of phenomenology where the spectator affectively experiences the future before it actually happens.

The French term *futur antérieur* captures this: the "will have" of the what-will-have-been-already. Like the crime that Sartre felt in his body will already have happened.

What could this mean? In a sense, Sartre implies how cinema is able to capture our sense of future by taking charge of what we imagine the future could be. We imagine what cinema wants us to imagine. Cinematic images, in other words, act on our future in terms of producing the future for us. In cinema we are imagining a future – anticipating a world and predicting its occurrences – that has already been imagined for us. Cinema pre-empts, so to speak, what our imagination generates as our future; it prescribes the metaphors and figurations by which we anticipate and also by anticipating produce what is to come. To put it otherwise, smoke here is not an index of fire taking place somewhere at this moment, but because we see smoke, there will have been fire (somewhere at some time).

Here imagination, most simply, the production of images, is not about "nihilating" reality on the verge of nothingness, but rather an act that creates the future.

Imagination is productive of reality, of how the world becomes, and it is this productive imagination that the cinematic apparatus has the power to capture. When entering the movie theatre, the what-may-come has already been determined by cinema. Furthermore, we can surmise that, when exiting the movie theatre, the cinematic apparatus equally governs the way in which the what-may-come will have been imagined by us. When exiting the movie theatre, the cinematic future, the cinematic will have been, equally governs the way we perceive the present and act upon the future. Perhaps it is in this sense that we can begin to think of the similarities between the *dispositifs* of cinema and the archive – in particular of cinema as the archive of our future(s).

Notes

[1] Richard Abel, *The Ciné Goes to Town: French Cinema, 1896-1914*, University of California Press, Berkeley 1998, p. 358.

[2] Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Words*, trans. Bernard Frechtman [*Les Mots*, Soleil, Paris 1964], George Braziller, New York 1964, pp. 123-124.

[3] Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Imaginary: A Phenomenological Psychology of the Imagination*, trans. Jonathan Webber [*L'Imagination*, Alcan, Paris 1936], Routledge, London 2004, p. 11.

[4] *Idem*, p. 14.

[5] *Idem*, p. 186.

[6] See Giorgio Agamben, *What Is an Apparatus? And Other Essays*, trans. David Kishik, Stefan Pedatella [*Che cos'è un dispositivo?*, Nottetempo, Roma 2006], Stanford University Press, Stanford 2009.

[7] See Daniel Stern, *The Interpersonal World of the Infant: A View from Psychoanalysis and Developmental Psychology*, Karnac, New York 1998.

[8] Arnold Modell, *Imagination and the Meaningful Brain*, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA 2006, p. 27.

[9] Jean Paul Sartre, *The Words*, cit., p. 124.

New Media Archive

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Conversion, Convergence, Conflation; Archival Networks in the Digital Turn

The greatest challenge for thinking about the archive today is to understand in what ways the analog and the digital are related. This seems to be an especially difficult task in the case of moving images, as the analog and the digital often are seen as so similar that they are perceived as one and the same. This is a conflation of media resulting from the fact that many so-called users – a term emphasizing individual choice and agency in browsing digital databases – only meet the digital aspect of images. I will here only address "born-analog" films, rather than films produced altogether with digital technology. My case study will be the *Les Archives de la Planète* collected by Albert Kahn between 1908 and 1932, currently undergoing digitization through the FAKIR (Fonds Albert-Kahn Informatisée pour la Recherche) database, accessible in different versions at the Albert Kahn Museum and on the Internet.

Access

In the age of digitization of analog materials, there is a demand on archives to make their holdings "accessible" online, or at least in computers on the premises. The "access" imperative is a pre-requisite for public funding, and implies an economy of the *content*. The question how the "content" of an archive, a museum or a collection can be made "accessible" varies according to the materiality of their holdings. No one expects that the digital representations of the ancient objects found on a historical museum's website provides real access to the "content" of the museum collection, but this confusion is quite often the case for film and photographic archives. Museums and cultural institutions often screen films or photographs in the digital mode without informing viewers of, or even reflecting upon, the convergence of the material. Any idea of just making the materials "content accessible," makes a severe mistake through conflation of complexity of media changes implicit in digital conversion.

In most accounts, the digitization of the moving image is understood either as a point of rupture that entails the end of the analog, or as a seamless continuity where most things stay the same. The established discourses of a period of transition on the indexicality of photographic image, or the interactivity of the digital sphere, favour a view of these regimes of images as isolated technologies. Instead, a perspective on the *connectivity* of the moving image will lead the attention to two networks of technologies, and the relationship that is being formed between them. There have been many terms for addressing the emergence of digital media in the last couple of decades, far too many for me to engage in a discussion with them here. I will only briefly comment on the three concepts of my title to show how they are instrumental for understanding the current configuration between the analog and the digital.

Conversion proposes that the digital substitutes for the analog. The conversion of media in the archive is perceived as going in a oneway direction. This view, as argued by David Rodowick in *The Virtual Life of Film* as well as by many other scholars, conflates the media set-up in our current archival logic, because it disregards the role of the analog within the digital files.[1] The analog film archival holdings, for example, are not just transformed into digital files. The analog is rather complemented with a digital alias for its use online and for searching materials, while the analog remains in the archive as the potential origin of future digitizations of the material in higher resolution or a different format.

Convergence is term with several meanings. When it is associated with Henry Jenkins' book *Convergence Culture*, the notion is content-based: "By convergence, I mean the flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries, and the migratory behaviour of media audiences who will go almost anywhere in search of the kinds of entertainment experiences they want."[2] Another take on convergence, that of Friedrich Kittler in his seminal *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, refers to the opposite condition, that "content" consists really only of surface effects, while it is code that determines the workings of media.[3] Still, the notion of the convergence of media into a multimedium, the computer, upholds the idea that the analog gives way fully to the digital, and advocates a view of a clean break in a historical process from the one to the other.

Conflation: the differences and intersections between analog and digital are conflated in the positions mentioned above. Just as digital video compression technology conflates one frame with the next, only updating its changes above a given threshold, the conversion and the convergence models end up with a one-medium situation. The digital aspects of analog film projection today, such as the use of digital sound techniques or the commonality of digital editing, should have consequences for our analysis of cinema, just as the analog basis of many films we see in digital mode must be addressed. The matter is further complicated by the fact that archival practice today often entails a digital intermediate, and that sometimes the master from which to strike new 35mm prints is a digital file. This does not mean that archival work has drifted into the digital altogether – there is no clear-cut conversion or convergence.

There are other terms that try to escape the conflated landscape of film archival territory, as outlined in the important book by Giovanna Fossati, *From Grain to Pixel: The Archival Life of Film in Transition*.[4] Fossati argues that "transition" is not only a phase that will end in a final result, but must be understood as an ever ongoing process reforming archival practice and theory. Although I have sympathy for Fossati's approach, "transition" still suggests that we are moving from one situation to another, especially with the "from - to" development in her book's title. Nevertheless, Fossati's work is invaluable as a nuanced attempt to theorize archival work noting that most restoration and preservation techniques of film archives are hybrids between analog and digital.

Trond Lundemo

The Persistence of Cinema

There is a surprising persistence of cinema in spite of decades of technical advances in the field of digital video production. Cinema persists, or even resists, in surprising ways. Cinema resists convergence with the digital because it remains the dominant cultural standard for what a moving image is. The analog film persists as the measurement for the quality of digital projection: is the image as good as, or better or inferior to, 35mm prints? The whole discussion of 2K and 4K projections has measured up to the 35mm frame and continues to do so. This may one day come to an end, when our portable screens have been established as the point of reference for all moving images, but the recurrent trope of scratches and worn film print effects on digital files on Youtube, and other online video servers, or in current digital filmmaking more generally, confirm that the analog is far from outmoded.

In spite of a turn to digital projection in film theaters there will be venues projecting analog films also in the future. It may be expensive, it may be rare, but at least as a niche, there is reason to believe it will exist. Even if most film labs are closing down these days, there will probably still be a market for a few of them in the world, and if film stock production is waning, it doesn't mean that it will have to end at zero. Just as there is an interest in hearing Bach's music performed on instruments of his time, and not on digital simulations of them, or seeing paintings in oil on canvas (or any other technique applicable), rather than going to the digital galleries of Corbis or Google, the film print will prevail. It may be argued that this will be a screening format for the cultural elite, which is far from the original popular dimension of the cinema. The scarcity of the analog film print will without doubt make it into a fetish for cinephiles, but this has after all already become a feature of much cinema since the new waves of the 1960s at least.

But this is not the major form of persistence for cinema. A third way that cinema persists is through well over a hundred years of film production that remains stored as analog in the film archives. Only the most uninformed digital evangelist would ever argue that this material should be digitized and then discarded. This material keeps on informing the digital files that meet our eyes in many different ways. There will continue to be different analog prints, resulting in various versions also in the digital domain. The standards for digital projection will change and evolve, resulting in the need for new scanning of the analog materials for higher resolution or for different techniques of compression. This means that we must take the relationship between the analog materials in the archives and their digitized presentations into consideration, be it as heavily compressed files in computers or online video servers or as jpeg-compressed images in 2K or 4K projection.

The Archives of the Planet

We have to conceptualize these relationships between the analog and the digital in different ways in each case. In the "Archives of the Planet," this relationship between the analog and the digital takes on special features. First, a short introduction for those who don't know the archive.

The French Jewish Banker Albert Kahn (1860-1940) created *Les Archives de la Planète* between 1912 and 1932 to "fix once and for all the look, practices and modes of human activity whose fatal disappearance is only a question of time."[5] He financed cameramen traveling to more than 50 countries, and the collection comprises 72.000 autochromes (a new color photography process on glass plates invented by Louis Lumière in 1907), 183.000 meters of film (over one hundred hours of projection) and 4.000 stereographs. The "Archives of the Planet" is an outstanding case for the study of archival self-reflexivity, since Kahn set out not to collect existing films and footage, as is the case with almost all other film archives, but to *chart* social life forms through the *means* of film and color photography. This allowed the archive to be developed from the viewpoint of a set of archival principles and theories. This undertaking is embedded in the globalizing movements and technologies of the early 20th century.

This collection was made for an unknown future, which, taken the growing interest in the archive, now seems to have come with the age of digitization.[6] Since the photographs and films were not shot with a commercial exploitation in mind, they do not adhere to the traditional media networks of its time. The archive is in a sense anachronistic, as the shots themselves were understood as separate entities, and not as parts of coherent works.[7] The whole material is kept without the single shots being edited into a defined context.

This unconventional, and some feel primitive, feature of the films of the Kahn archive means that very few people have seen them. All visitors to the Albert Kahn museum or to its website – or even researchers on the premises – will encounter the digital files instead of the analog material. This is in itself a situation that encourages a "content" perspective, perhaps, since the analog layer of the archive is invisible and inaccessible. Still today, researchers only have access to what has been digitized, which amounts to about 30% of the material. Even the researcher who has worked most consistently with the material, Paula Amad, cannot claim that she has seen all the existing images of the archive.[8]

The unseen archive recalls an archeological knowledge of things that are known to exist, yet have yet to be "unearthed," which is perhaps appropriate for an archive with ambitions to map the entire surface of the globe.

A second reason why the Kahn archive is of importance to these matters, is that it is a multi-medial archive, consisting of colour photography, black and white films (and a few in colour in the late 1920s), stereographs and some black and white still photographs. This means that the Kahn archive, even on the rare occasions when it was presented in exhibitions, consisted of a network of visual media. This is the reason that the autochromes or the films should not be considered in isolation, but rather focuses on how media relate to each other through distribution and feedback. The media constellations are like a microcosm of similar networks of media in cinema. The intersections between still and moving images, colour and black-and-white, 2D and 3D, form highly original compositions.

But also in the traditional cinema, whatever that is, there are media constellations that must be mapped and researched. This is what film archives try to do when they collect and preserve the films themselves, but also newspaper advertisements and reviews, movie posters, business letters and budgets, cinema architecture, etc. For any film scholar, to tackle a specific problem of analysis, it is necessary to go between archival media, and between archives, to try to make a montage of these elements.

The Digital Return

This media set-up is very different from the media intersections of the computer age. The digital superimposition of *Les Archives de la Planète* is the FAKIR database (Fonds Albert-Kahn Informatisée pour la Recherche). There are different databases for different contexts. The accredited researcher is given access to all of the digitized material, including shots and images that are not edited or linked together. On the museum premises, the visitor is given access to a selection of the material according to country, city, date or person. From the spring of 2010, a small part of the materials are also accessible online at www.albert-kahn.fr. The un-edited shots of the films are now linked by new cues; geographical, topical, thematic and material. The database architecture is designed for navigation according to a world map, the *mappemonde*, where one narrows in by choosing continents, countries and sometimes cities.

The Musée Albert Kahn has done what is expected of a public organisation giving access to its collection.[9] The links of the database already program the paths of navigation of the user and there is nothing that implies that the unexpected, sudden connection is facilitated by the new interface. The pathways of navigation in the database are as established and disciplined as those in the adjoining gardens from different parts of the world outside the Albert Kahn museum in Boulogne in the outskirts of Paris. The reason why the edited mode of the FAKIR database is striking is that it is so strongly opposed to the fragmentary dimensions of the analog archive. The only access to the *Archives of the Planet* for the ordinary user is in the edited mode. The films in the FAKIR database are edited together to represent a place or an event, either for previous TV productions or special screenings. Sometimes, the shots by the Kahn cameramen are intercut with other kinds of archival and stock footage. The autochromes are linked in succession, almost in PowerPoint mode, according to place or event. The user is also presented with a narrative in the Kahn Museum in Boulogne, where geographical unity of the stills and the occasional film montage is the structuring principle (recent topics being The Maghreb, "Infinitely India" and Japan). The BBC series *Edwardians in Colour: The Wonderful World of Albert Kahn* of 2009 makes use of parts of the material intercut with new shots and other archival materials to tell stories of events and places. This is the only access to the archive's materials made available to the public. The raw shot quality of the archive, where the beginning and end of each shot is still intact, which makes it stand out from other film collections and archives, is only accessible to the researcher of the analog material. This means in practice, that it is not accessible at all. The image alone, without a commentary, the shot without an adjoining shot, is a horror to our archive culture. It is seen as devoid of public interest by the archives, meaningless by the public and a disturbance in the database design. The image is supplied with a nametag, a place and date of birth, in order to embed it in a historical narrative and in an educational and political project.

The Superimposed Archives

It is well known that the moving image appeared as part of a complex intermedial environment, in terms of production, technology and exhibition. As Andre Gaudreault has argued, cinema emerged twice: Once as a technology (the Kinematograph) and again as a medium (Cinema).[10] In the first period, films were presented as part of a heterogeneous entertainment context, together with illusionist numbers, stage acts, songs, etc. Films also refer to a variety of sound and transmission technologies as well as other optical media in the early years. These connecting points, integrating other media in the exhibition or other technologies in the films (sound performance or recordings, etc.), are often lost in the film archive, necessitating a reconstruction of the transmediality through the connection of various artefacts and descriptions from different archives.

Cinema is later formed as a medium, ten to fifteen years after the first films, with the advent of specially designed motion picture houses, censorship by the state or by the industry itself, trade journals, and so on. The connectivity with other media now becomes more formalised. In exclusive film programs, where narration was striving towards self-containment, the media networks of cinema became more established and regulated.

Cinema belongs to the industrial age, or what Foucault would analyze as the disciplinary society. This period entails certain *connectivity* between media, which is dominated by thermodynamic machines and de-centralized networks. With the digitization of images, the media connectivity changes again. The regime of the digital promotes different kinds of correlations, cybernetic machines and distributed networks. The distribution of moving images is predominantly taking place through the interconnectibility between autonomous computers. In the film archive, however, one network of media is not simply substituting the other. The "born-analog" films persist as analog masters or "originals" in the archives, and they require that we devote attention to how they are connected to other media at the time of their production as well as in the time of their interconnection with digital files. For this reason, I argue, only to speak of a conversion of media into a digital convergence is insufficient. Rather, one needs to approach the new archival situation as a *superimposition* of two technological networks. The task for contemporary archive theory is to think about the various ways that these correlations are construed, and how the configurations between photochemical film and bits are coded.

Notes

[1] D.N. Rodowick, *The Virtual Life of Film*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass. 2007.

[2] Henry Jenkins, *Convergence Culture; Where Old and New Media Collide*, New York University Press, New York 2006, pp. 2-3.

[3] Friedrich Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter* [1986], Stanford University Press, Stanford 1999, pp. 1-2.

[4] Giovanna Fossati, *From Grain to Pixel: The Archival Life of Film in Transition*, Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam 2010. Fossati discusses transition in relation to rivalling concepts on pp. 132-140.

[5] Kahn quoted in: Paula Amad, *Counter-Archive; Film, The Everyday, and Albert Kahn's Archives de la planète*, Columbia University Press, New York 2010, p. 49.

[6] I have earlier addressed these changes entailed in the digitization of Kahn's collection as as a return of ghosts. Trond Lundemo, "'Flashes of Light' and 'the Rhythm of Life:' Spectres of Film in the Digital Archive," *At the Very Beginning - at the Very End; Film Theory in Perspective*, Università degli studi/Forum, Udine 2010, pp. 251-258.

[7] The nomadic existence of shots within and between films in early cinema led to an archival orientation in film production and theory that became less prominent with the domination of "classical" cinema. Trond Lundemo, "Archive Theory as Film Theory," *At the Very Beginning - at the Very End; Film Theory in Perspective*, cit., pp. 33-38.

[8] Paula Amad, *Counter-Archive; Film, The Everyday, and Albert Kahn's Archives de la Planète*, cit., pp. 2-3.

[9] Paula Amad suggests in the conclusion of her book that finally, with digitization, *Les Archives de la Planète* has become a traditional archive. *Idem*, p. 306.

[10] André Gaudreault, *Film and Attraction: From Kinematography to Cinema*, Illinois University Press, Champaign 2011.

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Pour une iconologie cinématographique ? Les archives de la Triangle et les nouvelles technologies[1]

Introduction

En histoire de l'art, la reproduction a permis de délocaliser les monuments et les œuvres. C'est d'ailleurs ce qui fonde pour partie la réflexion de Walter Benjamin sur le statut de l'œuvre d'art à l'heure de sa reproductibilité. Ce qui auparavant était géographiquement situé, et donc immobilier, est devenu transférable et donc comparable. Auparavant, quand un collectionneur voulait être éclairé sur la valeur de sa collection (qui est une sorte d'archive seconde), il devait s'en remettre au voyageur, à celui qui avait parcouru, par exemple, l'Europe et qui pouvait de mémoire comparer et donc hiérarchiser les œuvres. Cette reproduction n'a pas attendu le cinéma, ni même la photographie, puisque le relevé, le croquis, et même parallèlement la description ekphrastique, permettaient de se faire une idée de ce qui existait et de ce qui était comparable. Pourtant, dans un premier temps, ce que l'on compare est soit du souvenir, soit de la reproduction, quelle qu'en soit la forme. Warburg (son projet *Mnemosyne*), Elie Faure (son *Histoire de l'art*) et Malraux (son musée imaginaire) comparent largement sur la base de reproductions assemblées, et c'est parce qu'ils disposent de reproductions qu'ils peuvent se permettre de tisser des liens, de souligner les ressemblances et les homologies, accédant ainsi à une idée haute de l'art, qui vaut (au moins pour Malraux et Faure) aussi bien pour la qualité artistique que pour la dimension universelle, transfrontalière de celui-ci. Rappelons rapidement ce qu'était *Mnemosyne*, dernier grand projet de Warburg, interrompu par sa crise cardiaque du 26 octobre 1929 : en 1927, il s'est lancé dans un « atlas d'images », synthèse de l'ensemble de ses conférences et de ses recherches, quarante écrans rassemblant quelques mille photographies, assemblées par thème et régulièrement re-disposées en fonction de préférences successives qu'il donnait aux règles d'ordonnancement de chacun de ces tableaux, le tout pratiquement sans légende ou commentaire. Le modèle est tantôt la symphonie (les représentations sont en harmonie les unes avec les autres par-delà leurs oppositions et leurs différences), tantôt la carte du ciel où les œuvres entrent dans des constellations plus ou moins fixes où une œuvre appelle à distance sa transformation ou son contraire. Au fond, c'est ni plus ni moins ce que tente Godard, comme on le sait, avec la vidéo dans ses *Histoire(s) du cinéma* : par collage (par montage), tisser des liens entre images distantes et faire commenter des images par des images.

Symétriquement pour le cinéma, l'esthétique, qui pour des raisons historiques domine encore les études cinématographiques en France, a toujours placé la notion de cinéma (comme langage, comme art) sinon comme universelle, du moins comme internationale. Cela n'est pas sans fondement : d'une part dès les années 10 le cinéma se pense, au plan de la production et de la distribution, comme international (c'est ce que souligne Balazs par exemple, en montrant le lien entre investissement et rentabilité), et d'autre part le cinéma s'élabore en tant qu'art au plan international par le développement parallèle des techniques (caméras, pellicule, éclairage, montage…) et des modes de mise en scène. C'est aussi pourquoi l'esthétique s'est trouvée comme écartelée entre l'œuvre (dominée par un auteur) et l'art (forcément mondial), en passant par les écoles et les courants (néo-réalisme, nouvelle vague, modernité…), en sautant par-dessus le cinéma national, domaine de l'histoire du cinéma dans ses toutes premières formes. Ainsi, si Sadoul peut présenter une histoire mondiale du cinéma, c'est tout simplement en agrégeant les unes aux autres des cinématographies nationales, sans grand rapport entre elles.

Les Archives de la Triangle et la recherche à l'heure du numérique

1. Le Fonds Triangle de la Cinémathèque française

Ce sont, pour ce qui est des documents écrits, de véritables archives, dont on ne connaît pas explicitement le producteur, mais dont on peut deviner qu'il s'agit de Harry E. Aitken, président de Mutual, co-producteur de *Birth of a Nation* (David Wark Griffith, 1915) et président de Triangle. Ces documents écrits sont classés comme à l'origine au titre d'œuvre (*story* ou scénario) quand celle-ci n'a pas fait l'objet d'une adaptation, ou au titre du film (quand celui-ci a été réalisé).

Mais le fonds parisien, qui est à mettre en relation avec les fonds new-yorkais (MOMA pour les Griffith Papers et New York Public Library pour des livres de comptes Triangle), madisonien (Aitken Papers) et losangelesien (Mack Sennett Papers), comprend à la fois des documents écrits (94 boîtes d'archives), 1374 photographies d'exploitation et 26 films. On ne sait pas comment ont été collectées les photographies, bien qu'elles semblent avoir la même origine que celles conservées à Madison, à l'intérieur des dossiers de documents écrits, et la collecte des films s'est faite progressivement, avant et après l'acquisition du fonds de documents écrits.

C'est dire que les archives ont été dispersées plusieurs fois. Une première fois entre Aitken, Griffith et Sennett. Ou du moins, pour être plus précis et sans doute en accord avec l'organisation de la Triangle, qui était peu centralisée, chacun a conservé ses archives, celles d'Aitken incluant celles de Thomas H. Ince, qui, mort prématurément, n'a pas pu prendre soin du devenir de ses propres archives, aujourd'hui assimilées à celles de Aitken. Ensuite, les archives Aitken ont été divisées entre Madison, New York et Paris, quelques pièces allant aussi à la Georges Eastman House à Rochester.

L'activité de la Triangle cesse en différentes étapes. La firme disparaît en 1919 (le dernier film distribué sous le logo Triangle l'est en août 1919), mais ses films sont recyclés par la Tri-Stone en 1921-1924.

Ces archives sont donc devenues « lettre morte » en plusieurs étapes et correspondent à des strates différentes. Une première partie (1909-1915) correspond aux maisons de production initiales (New York Motion Pictures, Reliance et Majestic) et passe par Mutual, mais il n'y a pas d'archives Mutual (pas dans le fonds, hormis une ou deux lettres sur papier à en-tête et pas à notre connaissance ailleurs non plus). Une deuxième partie (1915-

1919) correspond à la Triangle, mais seulement pour partie puisque Sennett et Griffith ont conservé une part des archives. Une troisième partie correspond à la Tri-Stone qui exploite entre 1921 et 1924 les films Triangle. Et enfin une quatrième partie est essentiellement constituée par des listes établies *a posteriori*, peut-être dans les années 40 et listant les documents archivés entre 1909 et 1924. Il est clair que ces archives ont été « produites », car la sélection des pièces et leur classement correspond à une activité artistique et administrative centrée sur la collection de preuves de propriété ou de responsabilité : le matériel dit « littéraire » concerne les droits, les dossiers de *continuity scripts* concernent l'activité de production des films. Mais cela ne permet pas nécessairement d'identifier clairement les producteurs : il me semble qu'il y en a au moins deux, à savoir Thomas H. Ince et Harry E. Aitken.

Langlois acquiert le fonds parisien à New York en février 1962 : il est partiellement catalogué mais n'est pas communiqué au public. Il le sera en 1996 à l'ouverture de la Bibliothèque du film, mais il faudra encore attendre 2008 pour que des chercheurs se penchent sur son contenu.

Jusque là, rien que de très classique : dans un premier temps, des institutions successives conservent des papiers ; dans un second temps une archive les acquiert qui se soucie peu de la communication de ses avoirs ; et dans un troisième temps, quand enfin ces archives sont ouvertes au public, des chercheurs qui ne s'intéressent guère aux archives.

A cette absence d'intérêt on peut trouver plusieurs séries de raisons. La première est sans doute l'absence de notoriété artistique de la Triangle (il faudra revenir là-dessus, car au fond, ce n'est pas l'archive qui imprime son idéologie sur les documents, mais les chercheurs qui souvent impriment la leur sur ces fonds, allant au connu, au prestigieux, au visible, plutôt qu'à l'obscur, à l'inexploré). La seconde pourrait être l'absence de travail historique sur la période des années 10, oubliée entre le cinéma des premiers temps et la période classique d'Hollywood, et pour cette raison appelée « période de transition ». La troisième est l'absence publique des films (ils sont conservés mais on en ignore l'existence) et des papiers sans films attirent moins que des documents relatifs à des célébrités visibles. Enfin, la masse des documents (94 boîtes) a dû en décourager plus d'un. On touche d'ailleurs ici à un autre point qui est la constitution individuelle de la recherche en cinéma : il aura fallu un programme pluriannuel de recherche et un groupe de travail, systèmes nouveaux de travail qu'on ne peut compter parmi les nouvelles technologies, pour pouvoir s'attaquer à cette archive-là.

2. *Une quatrième étape : la numérisation et le travail en ligne*

Et c'est bien dans cette ligne que les nouvelles technologies sont entrées en lice. Les photographies avaient été numérisées dans un des plans de numérisation de la Bibliothèque du film, en raison de leur identification aisée (1374 photos sous un seul nom, celui de la Triangle). La Cinémathèque française a ensuite numérisé 22 films, qui sont devenus ainsi aisément consultables par les chercheurs, dans un grand confort puisque pratiquement chacun a pu disposer à domicile d'un CD ou d'un DVD pour une consultation instantanée à volonté.

Mais seulement quelques documents papier ont été numérisés à des fins de communication (colloque) ou de recherche (*continuity scripts*). Les bases de données de la FIAF ont permis d'établir la liste et la forme des films Triangle conservés dans le monde.

Pour la recherche elle-même, Internet a joué un rôle important dans l'identification d'autres archives (Madison, New York, Los Angeles), ou d'autres sources (*boards of censorship* de certains états, génériques, voire même vision en streaming de films entiers comme cela a été le cas pour *The Martyrs of the Alamo*, Christy Cabanne 1915, présent en entier et dans une copie de bonne qualité sur *YouTube*). A cela viennent s'ajouter deux autres outils : un carnet de recherche en ligne, mis en place en février 2009, qui est un outil de partage, réputé recueillir des commentaires à partir d'une visibilité mondiale (il n'en a reçu à ce jour aucun digne de ce nom) ; et un site, qui est en cours d'écriture et de mise en page à la Cinémathèque française pour présenter simultanément le fonds et la recherche qui a été effectuée (mise en ligne prévue pour début juin). Ces deux outils deviennent à leur tour une archive de la recherche elle-même, puisque le premier garde la trace des étapes de travail, de l'apport des uns et des autres, tout en facilitant la publication des travaux, notamment ceux des jeunes chercheurs qui peuvent ainsi aisément valoriser leur recherche. C'est un peu moins le cas du site de la Cinémathèque française dont la visée est plutôt de présenter le fonds et de susciter de nouvelles recherches en suivant ou en s'écartant des pistes déjà explorées.

Un matériau riche et des outils de travail performants. Il ne faut toutefois pas trop chanter merveilles : la numérisation des documents offre de très nombreux avantages, mais on en connaît aussi les travers. La dématérialisation du support risque de faire perdre des informations. C'est ainsi que j'ai découvert à Madison (où les photos n'ont pas été numérisées) que ces photos avaient toutes été collées sur des panneaux de carton, information dont je ne disposais pas à Paris où je n'ai eu affaire qu'aux documents numérisés. La vision sur écran d'ordinateur d'un film a de nombreux avantages, mais elle a aussi ses inconvénients sur des copies « brutes de décoffrage ».

3. *L'Absence, mais de quoi ?*

a) L'Absence de connexions entre les fonds

On peut donc dresser un tableau en creux de ces archives, en suivant la suggestion des organisateurs du colloque concernant la dimension d'absence qui frappe toute archive. Certes, 26 films (29 si on rajoute ceux de la Cinémathèque royale de Belgique et un film conservé en Norvège, à quoi il faut encore rajouter 3 titres présents aux Archives du film. On vient aussi d'en repérer 12 au BFI et 12 à la Cineteca del Friuli) sur le millier distribué par la Triangle entre 1915 et 1919, c'est peu. Certes le fonds parisien doit être complété par les fonds de Madison, de New York et de Los Angeles. Certes nous n'avons pas identifié d'archives des autres producteurs de la Triangle que sont les frères Kessel ou Charles Baumann, et nous n'avons pas connaissance d'archives de la Mutual, prédécesseur et concurrent de la Triangle, si ce n'est celles de Freuler à Chicago, un des dirigeants de cette compagnie, mais il s'agit de sa propre maison de production. De sorte que le chercheur se retrouve dans la position d'Isis collectant les morceaux d'Osiris pour reconstituer un corps démembré et dispersé. Mais en ce qui concerne la Triangle et ses annexes, la moisson est plus que riche, comme par exemple ces 52 microfilms de documents financiers que jamais personne, à ma connaissance, n'a encore exploités.

b) L'Absence de curiosité

Avant le programme ANR, le matériel avait peu fait l'objet d'investigations, sauf pour quelques films restaurés et programmés par la Cinémathèque française, mais plutôt au fil de l'eau et sans grand écho chez les chercheurs. Car force est de reconnaître que la première absence est celle de la curiosité des chercheurs. Le fonds « papier » est disponible depuis décembre 1996, date d'ouverture de la BIFI, et son catalogue complet pour les 94 boîtes est en ligne, ce qui ouvre zéro consultation du fonds entre décembre 1996 et février 2008. Cette absence de curiosité pour ce fonds n'est peut-être que l'écho d'une absence de curiosité pour le cinéma de cette époque, encore une fois classé rapidement sous l'étiquette commode de « période de transition » entre le cinéma des premiers temps et la période classique des studios américains. On s'en tient à la doxa : la Triangle est une tentative avortée de constitution d'un système intégré.

c) L'Absence de stabilité

Il est vrai que la période est difficile. Elle l'est même à deux titres. Le premier, bien connu, est le passage, à partir de 1908, au *feature film* et donc de deux à cinq (voire plus) bobines. Il s'agit effectivement d'une transition, qui prend dix ans (1908-1918) et qui n'est pas rectiligne (on va du court métrage au film-opéra de type *Birth of a Nation*, on oscille entre *le state rights* et le *road show*, et l'on se replie partiellement en 1917 sur le court métrage, sans doute pour des raisons de restrictions consécutives à l'entrée en guerre des Etats-Unis). L'absence, pour le cinéma, de données historiques développées sur cette période est particulièrement sensible pour les années qui m'intéressent tout particulièrement, à savoir la période 1915-1918. Or cette période est caractérisée par deux choses dont le lien a pu ne pas être évident : tout d'abord, l'instabilité des institutions cinématographiques, la prolifération des sociétés en raison de leur fragilité, des renversements d'alliance, des rachats in extremis, des sociétés écrans ou de substitution dès que surgit un problème juridique (censure d'un film par exemple qu'on fait distribuer par une autre société créée pour la circonstance) ou un problème financier (transferts de passif et d'actif, changement de conseil d'administration, etc.), dans un contexte de concurrence effrénée pour des enjeux nationaux et internationaux.

Grande instabilité des alliances et des structures (par exemple, Sennett quitte dès 1916 la Triangle dont il assure la moitié du programme, pour y revenir quelques mois après pour la quitter à nouveau au milieu de 1917), grande labilité des politiques (court ou long métrage, *road show* ou *state rights*, exclusivité ou non exclusivité), et grande complexité des organisations (ceci expliquant peut-être cela) comme par exemple l'organisation industrielle entre la côte Ouest (où l'on bâtit les nouveaux studios comme Universal City ou Inceville) et la côte Est (où reste les anciens studios et les laboratoires, mais aussi le *National Board of Censorship,* Broadway, les éditeurs et les banquiers, mais aussi la grande majorité du public), sans parler de la complexité de la distribution, liée aux décisions des censures étatiques locales. Pour ce qui est de la profusion des formes de films, du court métrage à la superproduction, et de la profusion des formes de distribution et d'exploitation qui tentent de les promouvoir, je ne peux que renvoyer à l'excellent ouvrage de Shelton Hall et Steve Neale.[2] Ils montrent d'ailleurs que la politique de la Triangle (mettre sous contrat les exploitations pour un programme hebdomadaire fixe) avait déjà été remise à l'honneur en 1914 par Paramount.[3]

C'est le premier élément de la difficulté : un paysage peu lisible parce que à la fois très labile et très peu documenté (en raison même de cette labilité).

d) L'Absence de modèles d'intelligibilité ?

Le deuxième élément de la difficulté tient au peu d'études menées sur la relation entre l'industrie cinématographique américaine et la politique nationale et internationale. On a pu examiner le développement de l'industrie et on a pu examiner la façon dont la guerre figurait dans le cinéma, notamment documentaire. Mais je ne connais pas d'étude fouillée et argumentée sur la relation entre le développement de l'industrie cinématographique entre 1910 et 1920, la structuration de la nation américaine et le rôle qu'elle entend jouer au plan international. Ce qui s'en approche le plus est le chapitre consacré par Michael Rogin à *Birth of a Nation* dans son livre *Les Démons de l'Amérique* (1987 pour l'édition américain, 1988 pour l'édition française au Seuil). La démarche que propose Michael Rogin mérite d'autant plus d'être soulignée qu'elle renvoie à celle de Panofsky expliquant que pour décrire formellement une œuvre, il faut préalablement en connaître le style et le contexte historique. Michael Rogin a pour projet dans son étude de *Birth of a Nation*, pris comme symptôme d'une démonologie politique des Etats-Unis, d'étudier de façon convergente « l'histoire politique des Etats-Unis après la guerre de Sécession, l'histoire sociale du cinéma, et enfin l'histoire des premiers films de Griffith ».[4] Il ne s'agit pas d'équivalences, ou de correspondances, mais bien pour Rogin de convergence : la connaissance fine de l'histoire des Etats-Unis permet de voir ce que le cinéma a de social, puis de voir en quoi les premiers films de Griffith sont convergents (ou non) avec cette double histoire. A partir de là, on ne peut que regretter que Michael Rogin se lance dans une psychanalyse structuraliste de la sexualité personnelle de Griffith à travers l'image du sabre de son ivrogne de père et l'émasculation censurée du noir ayant tenté de porter atteinte à la pureté d'une vierge blanche.

Ce qui est absent des archives, pour nous aujourd'hui, ce sont des modèles d'intelligibilité qui portent à la fois sur l'histoire tout court (histoire des Etats-Unis, et plus précisément ici les liens entre Sécession, guerre hispano-américaine et guerre avec les Philippines, par exemple, histoire des guerres civiles, histoire internationale de la 1ère guerre mondiale notamment pour les relations complexes entre Allemagne et Etats-Unis, Allemagne et Russie, Allemagne et Mexique, Allemagne et Japon), et pour l'histoire du cinéma, à la fois dans son développement industriel et dans son esthétique de l'époque (on n'est pas encore à l'âge classique et les formes du langage cinématographiques, comme les formes de distribution des fonctions entre les créateurs et les techniciens, ne sont pas celles que nous avons l'habitude de traiter dans le cinéma de fiction classique ou moderne). Je ne m'étendrai pas sur ce point que j'ai déjà traité ici et ailleurs.

Malgré l'abondance des archives, malgré la disponibilité des personnels de conservation, malgré l'existence d'un programme de recherche sur trois ans, il aura aussi manqué deux choses : d'abord des compétences (notamment en matière économique pour étudier les livres de comptes, mais on pourrait aussi regretter que des littéraires ne se penchent pas sur l'organisation des histoires et des personnages), et ensuite un véritable travail d'équipe entre chercheurs. Non qu'il n'ait pas été présent, réel et souvent efficace, mais force est de constater que les sciences humaines vivent encore sur le mode de l'individu, pour ne pas dire plus, et pas encore sur le mode de la communauté, c'est-à-dire un des modes de fonctionnement de l'Internet.

4. Une narratologie et une iconographie possibles

Par rapport à l'ensemble des archives Triangle, le numérique n'occupe donc qu'une faible place : les photos, les films et une infirme partie de la partie la plus importante à savoir les documents écrits. Pour les films et les pour les photos, le numérique a permis non seulement une facilité extrême d'accès, mais aussi une capacité de comparaison pour moi entièrement nouvelle. La possibilité d'afficher simultanément sur un écran une vingtaine de photos, de pouvoir les classer, les regrouper. Même chose pour les films. Le numérique permet donc l'établissement d'une familiarité avec les documents, en autorisant une comparaison et donc l'émergence de catégories, de séries, d'apparentements, de ressemblance. Par exemple, pour les photos, cela peut être technique (pose, instantané), mais aussi esthétique (cadrage, composition). Cela peut être aussi thématique, de sorte que le corpus numérisé fait apparaître des représentations dominantes en laissant deviner les principes de choix : pour le western la chevauchée, la bagarre, le *hold up*, pour le film de guerre la bataille, le lit de mort, l'assaut et la résistance (qui vaut aussi pour le *western*), le moment dramatique du choix ou de la décision. Se dessine ainsi par le biais du numérisé la possibilité d'une iconographie, voire d'une iconologie.

Barbara Le Maître nous a mis sur la piste du viol ou de l'agression sexuelle, à côté de la scène de séduction, série qui pourrait s'intégrer dans une série encore plus large de la femme contrainte par les hommes, subissant leur loi. Dans le même ordre d'idée, il y a la jeune femme à la fenêtre, enfermée mais rêveuse, pour un ailleurs qui ne peut se représenter. Plus minimalement encore, la valise du provincial dont il craint qu'on veuille dans la grande ville lui voler. Ce sont des moments que la photographie organise et met en avant, dressant ainsi un catalogue illustré, implicite mais réel, de ce qui peut paraître cinématographiquement intéressant pour un client potentiel.

Il en va de même pour les films si on les consolide par l'étude des scénarios pour repérer des constantes dans les constructions dramatiques. La première que j'ai pu repérer est celle de la guerre civile, qui va de la guerre de Sécession au génocide arménien en passant par le Mexique, l'Irlande et la Russie. On trouve aussi, apparemment plutôt chez Ince, un schéma narratif articulé autour d'un père trop sévère (ou trop rigide) qui sera sauvé in fine par son enfant. En 1915-1917, il y a des choses plus fines encore comme le recours au travelling arrière dans les fins de films pour signifier une avancée libératrice.

Le modèle est à trouver sans doute chez Griffith et dans *Birth of a Nation* pour la mise en branle de l'armée du Klu Klux Klan, mais on peut repérer cela dans *The Lamb* (Christy Cabanne, 1915), *The Crab* (Walter Edwards, 1917), *The Pinch Hitter* (Victor Schertzinger, 1917), le premier pour un escadron de cavalerie au trot et les deux autres pour une marche triomphale. Cela est repérable par le caractère tout à fait exceptionnel de ce mouvement de caméra (on ne note que quelques légers re-cadrages latéraux pour des plans d'ensemble en décor naturel) et le travelling arrière s'enlève ainsi sur l'absence de mouvement et donc l'absence de tout autre type de travelling : pas de travelling avant, pas de travelling latéral. Seulement un travelling arrière, frontal (la caméra recule face à un groupe en marche), assez bref, à cadrage constant (groupe et caméra partagent la même vitesse de déplacement) en fin de film, au moment où la forte contrainte pesant depuis le début sur le personnage principal se lève et où son triomphe se fait jour. On a alors la conjonction récurrente d'une action (la marche à la victoire), d'un moment (la presque fin du film) et d'un élément technique (le travelling arrière). On doit alors y ajouter un autre élément : il faut à tout cela une chaussée (ou un trottoir) et donc un milieu urbain car à l'époque on ne sait pas encore utiliser les rails de travelling : la caméra est embarquée sur un véhicule auquel la chaussée lisse est nécessaire. Ce petit exemple d'iconographie cinématographique (dont le motif a du avoir une durée de vie extrêmement courte dans cette forme cristalline, même si on peut le retrouver à la fin de *News from Home* ou de *La Gueule ouverte*) nous met sur la voie de ce qu'était en réalité la supervision opérée par Griffith ou par Ince, à savoir la suggestion de formules iconographiques, soit la relation codifiée entre un motif narratif et un motif visuel.

Autrement dit, la conjonction entre l'ouverture des archives (catalogues en ligne, consultation possible) et donc leur accroissement au regard du travail de recherche, et les nouvelles technologies comme la numérisation ou le carnet de recherche me semble ouvrir la voie à un renouveau possible de la narratologie et de l'iconographie en repassant du niveau du film ou de l'œuvre d'un auteur au niveau du cinéma en général.

Un des avantages de la Triangle est sa courte vie et sa grande production : elle est ainsi amenée à se répéter et à faire émerger des constellations, des configurations privilégiées, notre rôle étant de comprendre ce qui a présidé à l'élection de ces configurations privilégiées. On peut alors en revenir au plan du cinéma, de sa spécificité, comme le souhaitait Christian Metz, dans une convergence de la narratologie (l'examen attentif de la construction des *continuity scripts* pour le profilage des personnages et leur structuration réciproque) et de l'iconographie (le lien entre une forme visuelle et une forme du contenu, ce que Panofsky appelait, notamment dans son article « Contribution à un problème de description des œuvres appartenant aux arts plastiques […] », un *type*).

La photographie de plateau, qui est un niveau supérieur de sélection (tel aspect de telle scène dans tel film) peut sans doute nous y aider. Mais comme je l'ai indiqué, il me semble qu'on peut le faire pour la Triangle pour des schémas narratifs (le père trop sévère sauvé par son enfant initialement meurtri) ou des schémas iconographiques (le travelling arrière pour la marche triomphale). Accéder à une iconologie de l'époque sera pour un deuxième temps, quand ce premier temps aura été pleinement réalisé.

Notes

[1] Ce qui suit s'inscrit dans un programme de recherche ANR (décembre 2007 - juin 2011) intitulé *Cinémarchives*.

[2] Shelton Hall, Steve Neale, *Epics, Spectacles and Blockbusters. A Hollywood History*, Wayne State University Press, Wayne 2010.

[3] *Idem*, p. 46 : voir chapitre « Superspecials, Specials and Programs, 1916-1917 ».

[4] Michael Rogin, *Les Démons de l'Amérique. Essais d'histoire politique des États-Unis*, Seuil, Paris 1998, p. 206.

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Sortation: On a User-Based Approach to Digital Meta-Archives

The title of my paper contains at least three terms which need an explanation: "Sortation," "User-Based Approach," and "Digital Meta-Archives." But before I engage in these three concepts, I want to talk about another two, which are "database" and "archive."

Database

About ten years ago, Lev Manovich published *The Language of New Media,* in which he described "Modern Media" as "the new battlefield for the competition between database and narrative."[1] According to him, one can look at the history of human ideas as a perpetual rivalry between data information storage on the one hand, and the creative use of stored information on the other hand. The database, where information is stored, belongs to the world of the paradigm, because it is organised along the lines of associatively connected similarities, whereas narration belongs to the world of syntagm, because it is organised as a linear sequence of logically connected elements. One of Manovich's main points in the book is that literary and cinematic narratives function as "true" narratives, as syntagmatic narratives, because the letters and words or the frames are organised in linear sequences. New media narratives, in contrast, function as paradigmatic narratives, because a CD-Rom, for example, organises its content in a way that favours the associative combination of elements, which all possess the same significance.

Another of Manovich's points is that although cinematic narration is generally a syntagmatic, linear type of narration, there are examples of directors who have worked with a rather paradigmatic approach towards it. He mentions Dziga Vertov and Peter Greenaway, as in the case of Vertov, *The Man with the Camera* (1929) can be understood as "a linear printout […] of a database"[2] (different shots of work activities followed by different shots of leisure, and so on), and Greenaway organised most of his films not by logically connecting the scenes, but by applying a system of numbers.

As convincing as these particular two cases might be, Swiss film scholar Barbara Flückiger has rightly pointed out that the "paradigmatic turn" Manovich describes did not yet have a great effect on the production of cinematic narration. However, she also mentions that the reception of cinematic narration could be decisively affected.[3]

Archives - Digital Meta-Archives

Before continuing to talk about the reception of cinematic narration, I want to take a look at the notion of "archive." Every archive is a concrete database of objects, and most archives are organised with the help of a virtual database, which represents the concrete items of the archive, and connects them with additional information, such as meta-information provided as text. In a film archive, for example, it is possible to locate all the available material of a particular film by searching for its title in the virtual database.

The fact that every archive is a database is not reversible: not every database is an archive, because contrary to a database, an archive is an institution guided by a set of rules and ethics.

An archive does not only exist to collect and organise material, but also to preserve it. This is why many people refuse to call a digital platform like YouTube an archive. From the point of view of an archivist, this seems to be true for the reasons just mentioned. But from the point of view of the user, YouTube is a virtual database with direct access to the represented, and very concrete items. For the user, YouTube seems to be something like the fusion of the archive / concrete database with the virtual database. If I type the title of a clip, I do not get the information where it is stored, but I can watch the clip at once. I would like to call that a meta-archive.

User-Based Approach: Sortation

In a meta-archive, like YouTube, the meta-information for each clip differs considerably from the meta-information given in virtual databases of traditional film archives. There, the meta-information is essentially used to specify each item in a way that distinguishes it from other items, and to inform about its physical condition. In a meta-archive, however, the condition of the item is not relevant, and the meta-information is essentially used to label each item in a way that it can be compared to other items with similar content. The categories of the meta-archive database differ clearly from those of the traditional archive database: users are not looking for the second reel of the 35mm nitrate print, with vinegar syndrome, made by a particular director, from some country, and in a specific year. They want to know which new clip in the category "news & politics" is more often seen, by other users, than the one they have posted the week before.

In other words, the meta-archive database is much more organised in the spirit of a database (in a paradigmatic spirit) than the virtual database of the traditional archive. The purpose of the meta-archive is not to help find a *particular* item, but to help find *related* items.

My personal view is that this is indeed a decisive turn with consequences for the reception of films distributed in digital format. A film scholar, before the 1970s, had to rely a lot on his memories and on his notes of all the films he had seen, and wanted to write about. With the invention of home video, it became possible to watch a film at home and as often as wished, as well as to be able to stop and rewind it. It should not come as a surprise that structuralist and narrativist theories could be applied to films in a much more elaborate way, since the release of feature films on VHS. However, since the DVD, as well as with the Internet, platforms for audiovisual content, with the capacity to break everything down into discrete units, I would argue for the close studies of

the aesthetics of the material, and therefore, not of the *narrative coherence* of the elements, but of the *status* of each *single* element, becoming a much more relevant issue of scholarship than they have ever been. This includes an increased interest in the comparison of cinematic motifs, which is a major paradigmatic effect.
Traditional film archives, if they digitise their material or not, will never be able to set up databases of relevant cinematic motifs to be found in their holdings with the necessary meta-information. I think that for everybody interested in studying audiovisual aesthetics, for film scholars who act as users of the traditional film archives, it is indispensable to at least think about building a meta-archive for a particular kind of cinematic motif he or she is interested in. In order to build such a meta-archive, it is necessary to first *sort* the material one has access to according to a particular parameter. This is why I have chosen to call this activity "sortation," in opposition to the main task of the traditional archive, which is preservation. Sortation means organising shots, or sequences of shots, in groups of similar cinematic motifs, which are not necessarily important for the narration of each single film, but open new perspectives when considered as a group and compared to each other.

Examples for Meta-Archives of Cinematic Motifs

In the second part of my paper, I want to give a few examples of the types of cinematic motifs such meta-archives could contain. I want to structure them in the following groups: iconographic motifs, narrative motifs, rhetorical motifs, and stylistic motifs.

Iconographic Motifs

First of all, it should be noted that a meta-archive like YouTube is what Eli Horwatt has called a "reciprocal archive,"[4] *from* which you cannot only download data, but *to* which you can also upload. Not every meta-archive has to be reciprocal, but as the objective of a meta-archive is to perpetually expand the collection and the perspectives taken of the items in the collection, the tendency of meta-archives is to be reciprocal. A consequence of this tendency is that many users of such an audiovisual meta-archive like YouTube are producers of content themselves. They download, remix, and upload elements providing with every upload the meta-information required for the classification of clips in this particular environment.
This might entail that film scholars working in the field of audiovisual aesthetics will more and more decide to work as remixers of the material they study, in order to work on, explain, and illustrate their particular interest. The remixers of the digital age are the found footage filmmakers of the analogue era. Found footage filmmaking is nothing but database filmmaking in Manovich's sense, much more than the films of Vertov or Greenaway are. It is certainly true that found footage filmmakers have always had a perspective on the material they were working with, which could be characterised as a somehow scholarly view. One example of such a scholarly found footage database filmmaker is Harun Farocki who has for example made a film about the recurrent cinematographic motif of *Workers Leaving the Factory* (*Arbeiter verlassen die Fabrik*, 1995). Another example, in his oeuvre, is *The Expression of Hands* (*Der Ausdruck der Hände*, 1997), where he links gestures, which are symptomatic of Taylorism in work situations, with the narrative gestures of the films.
Several years after these two films were made, the German media scholar Wolfgang Ernst wrote together with Farocki a sort of manifesto, in which they announced

> *the project for a kind of visual library of film which would not only classify its images according to directors, place and time of shooting, but beyond that: it would systematise sequences of images according to motifs, topoi and narrative statements, thus helping to create a culture of visual thinking with a visual grammar, analogous to our linguistic capacities.*[5]

Ernst and Farocki do not fail to mention in their article that such a project clearly follows in the tradition of art historian Aby Warburg and his own database project, the famous *Bilderatlas Mnemosyne*, in which he tried to map the recurring gestural and bodily motifs in the history of representation. Warburg called these manifestations, of psychic and social energies, the *Pathosformel* – the pathos formula. Béla Balázs is maybe the one who most famously wrote about some kind of pathos formula in the field of silent cinema, a universal language of gestures.[6] Therefore, it does not come as a surprise that an Austrian found footage filmmaker has tried to map *silent*, mostly early cinema, according to iconographic and also narrative parameters. I am referring to Gustav Deutsch, and his series *Film Is*, parts 7-12 (*Film ist. 7-12*, 2002). According to Deutsch, film is movement and time, light and darkness, an instrument, material, a blink of an eye, a mirror, comic, magic, conquest, writing and language, emotions and passion, memory and document. These are the categories of his cinematic meta-archive which is, if you buy the DVD, accompanied by a booklet with meta-information on the elements of *Film is* provided as text.

However, cinematographic meta-archives are not limited to silent film. A good example to prove this assertion is the work of the German film scholar Daniel Hermsdorf, who belongs to the avant-garde of film scholars turned remixers. In 2005 he produced a compilation film with the title: *At Last, I Got Top Billing* about the American character actor J. Carrol Naish who has appeared in about 200 Hollywood films and 100 TV productions, mostly in supporting roles.

In Hermsdorf's film, a combination of takes taken from 17 films, Naish for example starts to say something dressed as a pirate and finishes it as the director of a bank. The funny thing is, although the pirate and the director are both played by the same actor, they do not necessarily speak with the same voice, because Hermsdorf has used the German dubbed versions of Naish's films (and secondary actors like Naish are not always dubbed by the same person). This side effect directed Hermsdorf's attention towards dubbing, and made him produce another compilation film called *Dubbed*, in which the parameter for associatively linking shots and sequences is not a single actor but a single dubbing voice connecting different actors, like Sean Connery and Michel Piccoli, who say similar things with the same voice in very different films. This is a good example of how cinematographic meta-archives can enrich the work of a film scholar, here by demonstrating the effect of dubbing on the reception of fiction film history.

However, not every meta-archive has to be cinematographic in the sense of containing moving images with sound. If the database is about particular motifs, which are limited to single frames, or which can be represented by single frames, the meta-archive can also work with screen shots. I guess this is what Lorenz Engell and André Wender, two media scholars from Bauhaus University in Weimar, had in mind two years ago, when they published an article in the first issue of the then new review of the German Society for Media Studies called *Zeitschrift für Medienwissenschaft*. In this article, they announced the building of a database for the collection and comparison of cinematic objects, by which they meant Venetian blinds, hats, telephones, rain, wind, and the like. Drawing on Bruno Latour's actor-network-theory, they called these objects "cinematic actors" with the same narrative status as actors of flesh and blood, a designation reminiscent of Béla Balázs's and Rudolf Arnheim's theories of silent film.[7] What became of this project is as unknown to me, as what became of Ernst's and Farocki's project. But if you want to get an idea of what Engell and Winkler were planning, you might want to visit www.imcdb.org, which is the address of the *Internet Movie Car Database*, where you can look up all the cars of the world and their appearances in motion pictures.

Narrative Motifs, Rhetorical Motifs, and Stylistic Motifs

Apart from purely *iconographic* motifs, it is imaginable to build a database dealing with more complex *narrative* motifs or narrative patterns, which have been repeated and diversified in the course of international film history. This could be a great help for, and contribution, to genre studies. Similarly, *rhetorical* motifs are likely to be appropriate items for such scholarly meta-archives. By rhetorical motif, I mean a shot, which is charged with meaning by a succeeding shot, for example a shot of chattering women followed by a shot of cawing parrots, as in *La Belle Dame sans merci* (Germaine Dulac, 1921). Similar combinations exist in *Viktor and Viktoria* (*Viktor und Viktoria*, Reinhold Schünzel, 1933), and *Fury* (Fritz Lang, 1936). In the first example (women and goose), and in the second (women and hens), the motif has crossed the border between silent and sound film, as well as, French and other national cinemas.

A fourth group of motifs worthwhile considering for scholarly meta-archives would be *stylistic* motifs, which concentrate on the use of certain cinematic technologies. I want to end this paper in the spirit of my forerunners Harun Farocki, Wolfgang Ernst, Lorenz Engell, and André Winkler by announcing the project of a database. At the Film and Television University "Konrad Wolf" in Potsdam-Babelsberg, I am currently working on a book dealing with the functions of slow motion sequences as well as superimposed shots in film history. As from 2012 this book project will be accompanied by a database, in which slow motion sequences and superimposed shots will be fed together with meta-information on their functions. This is meant to be a model-project, hopefully spawning not only further research on slow motion and superimpositions, but also inciting other scholars to follow up with meta-archives on other kinds of cinematic motifs.

Notes

[1] Lev Manovich, *The Language of New Media*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, MA-London 2001, p. 234.

[2] *Idem*, p. 241.

[3] Barbara Flückiger, *Visual Effects. Filmbilder aus dem Computer*, Schüren, Marburg 2008, pp. 414-416.

[4] Eli Horwatt, *A Taxonomy of Digital Video Remixing: Contemporary Found Footage Practice on the Internet*, in Iain Robert Smith (ed.), *Cultural Borrowings: Appropriation, Reworking, Transformation, Scope*, e-Book, Nottingham 2009, p. 76.

[5] Wolfgang Ernst, Harun Farocki, *Towards an Archive for Visual Concepts*, in Thomas Elsaesser (ed.), *Harun Farocki. Working on the Sightlines*, Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam 2004, p. 265.

[6] Béla Balázs, *Der sichtbare Mensch oder die Kultur des Films* (1924), Frankfurt/Main, Suhrkamp 2001.

[7] Lorenz Engell, André Wendler, "Medienwissenschaft der Motive," in *ZFM*, no. 1, 2009, pp. 38-49.

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Archive Dramas

To a certain extent at least, archives and documentaries work accordingly to the same basic principles and are subject to similar criticisms. Both are united by their claim to document some aspect of social reality, the way in which they select a particular part of this reality to document and – for the archive more than the contemporary documentary – their assertion of a neutral stance towards the material they collect to this end. Although it would not be hard to draw up the battle lines between modern documentary film theory and archives, my own concerns are of a less militant nature.

In the following, I am interested in exploring the inherent contradictions attached to archives and their archetypes, with the emphasis mainly on the archive as a concept rather than an institution.

Noah's Ark can be seen as one of the first archetypes of an archive (fig. 51). It is the preservation aspect that is dominant here, as so much is at stake – can all of creation be saved? This goal can be achieved by means of an archive capable of defying the forces of nature, which simultaneously contains all the elements of a modern archive.

Let us begin with the concept of *selection*. It is not possible to archive everything, which clearly implies that some sort of policy is in place to determine what exactly should be archived. To start with, this entails a differentiation between individual phenotypes and historical classification genotypes. Noah's Ark was only concerned with the latter, selecting a male and female animal for each species. But while the selection process, the fall of every archive, has a certain potential for drama, in this case any dramatic remains conspicuous by its absence. With a catastrophe approaching, one would expect chaos to break out; the fact that it doesn't leads us on to the next point, however.

Let us now move on to the idea of *organisation*. The archiving process seems to be organised according to some sort of abstract principle, which does require any sort of human intervention and which is accepted by all those involved. This obvious and abstract classification system, or "invisible hands," already anticipates the sort of poststructuralist criticism of the archive undertaken by Derrida and Foucault much further down the line. For them, the inscription of such social orders had always been a state of affairs conveyed without the subject's knowledge, where the subject ultimately leads a shadowy existence within dominant systems of order.

If we take a closer look here, two people can just be made out on the margins, admittedly only at third glance. But their significance is unclear, as they are only visible as two dark silhouettes. A poststructuralist interpretation could hardly have found a better way of illustrating it.

The true modernity of Noah's Ark is due to its emphasis on *reproduction* however. This is linked to a move away from the concept of the original, which was for a long time constitutive for the traditional concept of an archive. The individual loses significance as a result of the focus on the genotype, with the survival of a particular species coming instead to the fore. This principle has managed to outlive its origins in legend and can be found today in modern preservation concepts, such as that which forms the basis of the Svalbard Global Seed Vault. "The Svalbard Global Seed Vault opened in 2008 on a remote island in the Arctic Circle, receiving shipments of 100 million seeds that originated in over 100 countries. The deposits include unique varieties of major African and Asian food staples such as maize, rice, wheat, cowpea etc."[1] (fig. 52) Its goal is also to preserve biological diversity over a long period of time and provide a refuge from the ravages of current industrial agricultural policy. This is by no means the only similarity; the facility itself is supposed to function independently of any direct human presence and comes across itself much like a seed within a barren natural landscape. Incidentally, you really have to have seen the video footage of the inauguration party in order to understand the project's true character.

But the radical way in which the preservation aspect is carried out here in the midst of concrete and permafrost also raises the question of a further constitutive element for the archive.

On 26th February 2008, the same day that the Svalbard Global Seed Vault opened, the maize genome was published some 5000 km away in Washington (fig. 53).[2] A mere coincidence? The maize genome data has been freely available since then and can be accessed at the Genbank database or at maizesequence.org.

The story of Noah's Ark has thus been updated, albeit with a different focus. A more extreme notion of preservation can be observed on the one hand, while entirely new concepts of access based on spatial and conceptual separation have appeared on the other. But can this example of an archive for natural creation also be applied to the cultural sector?

For a long time, the concept of the unique original was inextricably linked to the archive. The concept of the genotype could at best be applied to the libraries and the industrially produced cultural goods they contain. But these prerequisites change in a quite fundamental manner with the start of the digital age. While many originals are now being digitalised with no expense spared, there are also many objects which only exist *in statu nascendi*, i.e. in digital form. Digitalisation provides the first ever opportunity to separate information from the medium used to carry it, thus allowing information to be passed on over generations – something that cannot be achieved when it is tied to a particular medium. In this way, it represents a modification of the concept of Noah's Ark, which turned the idea of allowing an archive to survive through reproduction into a paradigm.

But much like natural archives, digital archives for cultural and knowledge also pay a price when it comes to differentiation. Access and preservation are separated in quite radical fashion, with access occurring via web-based databases while the actual archiving of digital information takes place in data processing centres located elsewhere. As is already becoming clear today, this also brings about a change in the archive itself. We are not seeing the death of the archive but rather it's differentiation and dissolution.

Illustrations

51. *Noah's Ark* (1846), by the American folk painter Edward Hicks, Philadelphia Museum of Art.
52. The Svalbard Global Seed Vault.
53. *The Maize Genome Data*: it can be accessed at the Genbank database or at maizesequence.org.

Notes

[1] Dan Shapley, "The Svalbard Global Seed Vault," *The United American Freedom Foundation*, http://www.uaff.us/the_svalbard_global_seed_vault.htm, last access 23 January 2012.

[2] Maggie Fox, "Researchers sequence genome of corn," Reuters, http://www.reuters.com/article/2008/02/26/us-corn-genome-idUSN2632641520080226, last access 23 January 2012.

l'archivio/the archive
immagini/images

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TELEVISIONE

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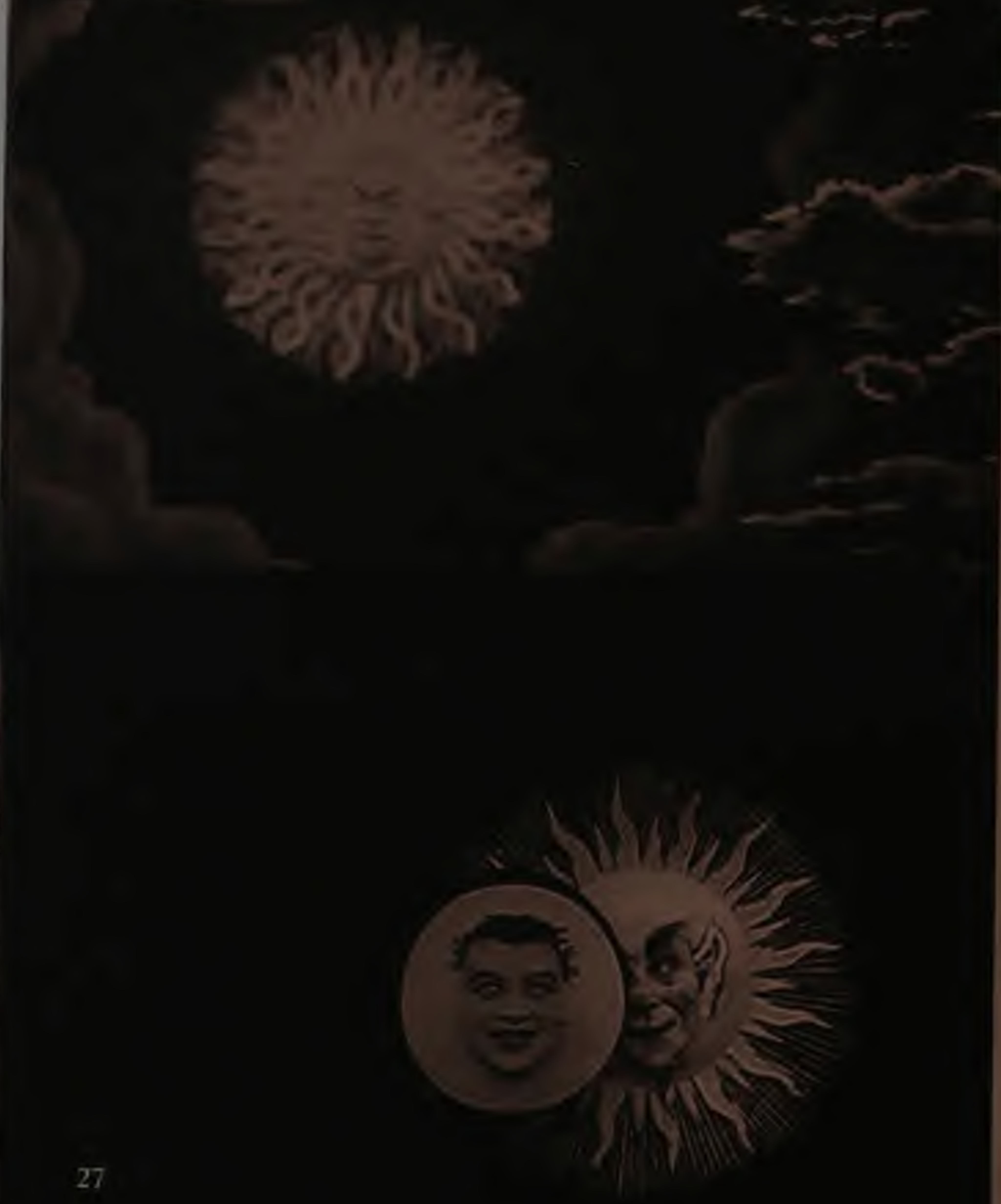

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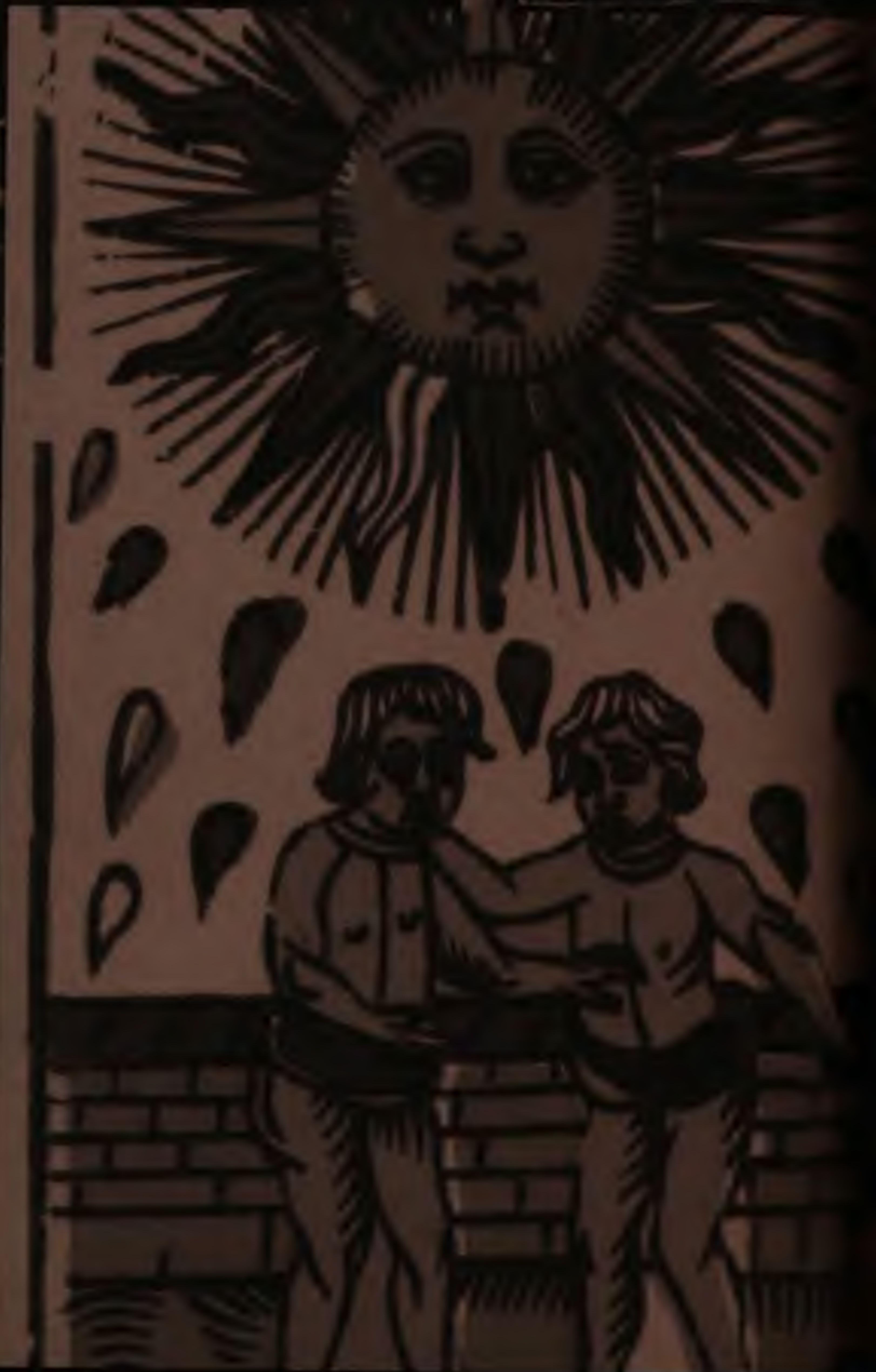

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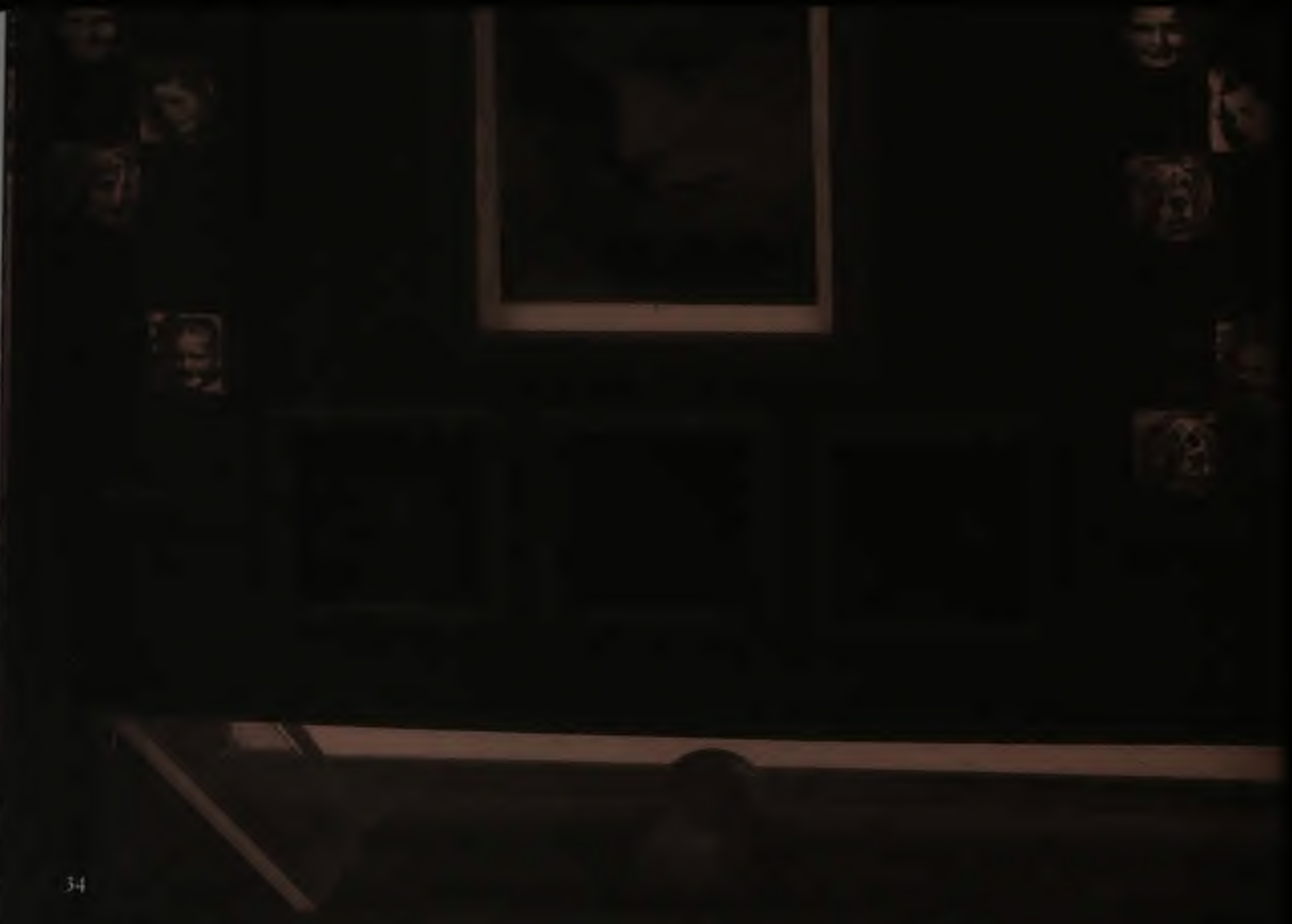

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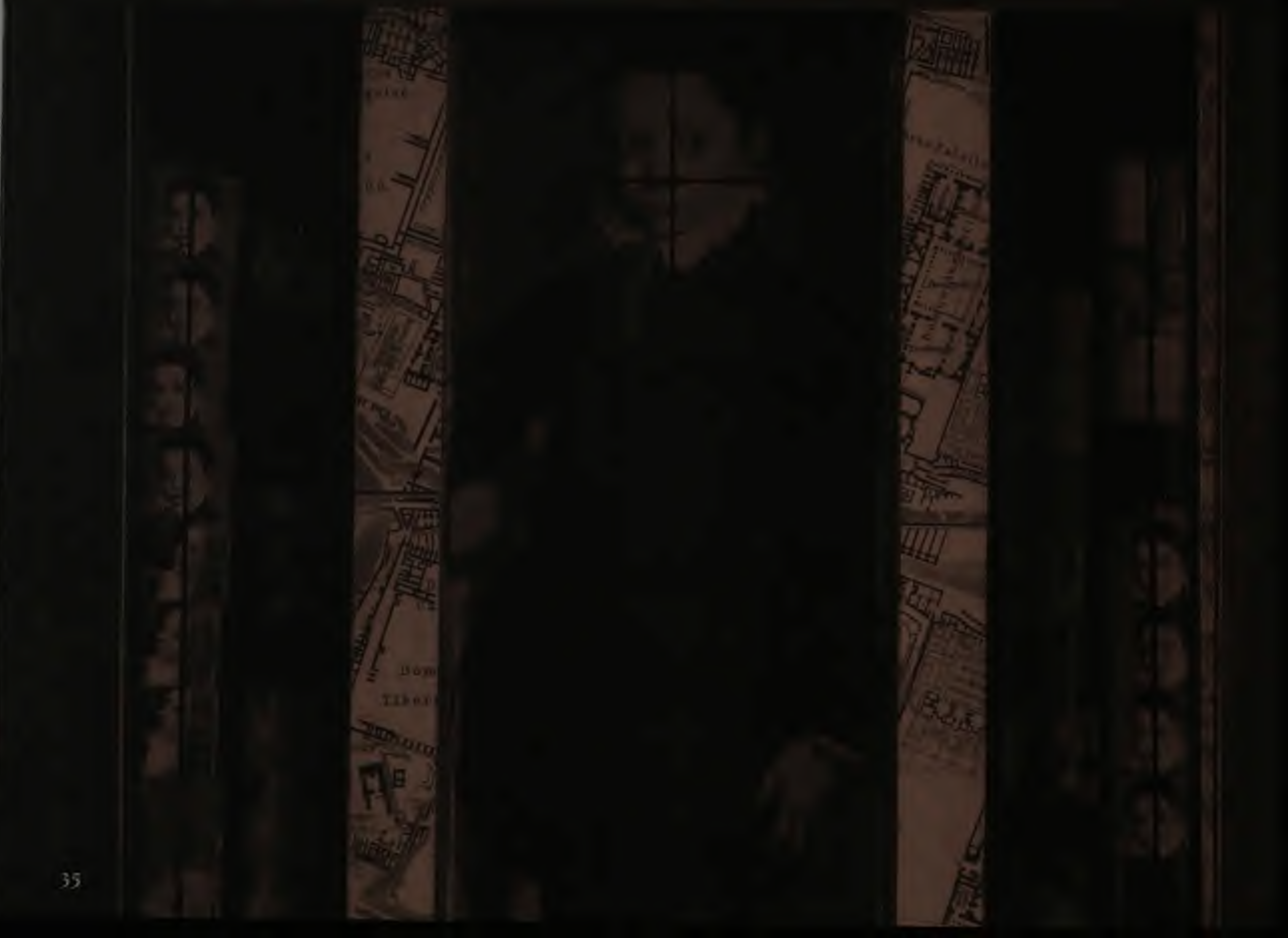

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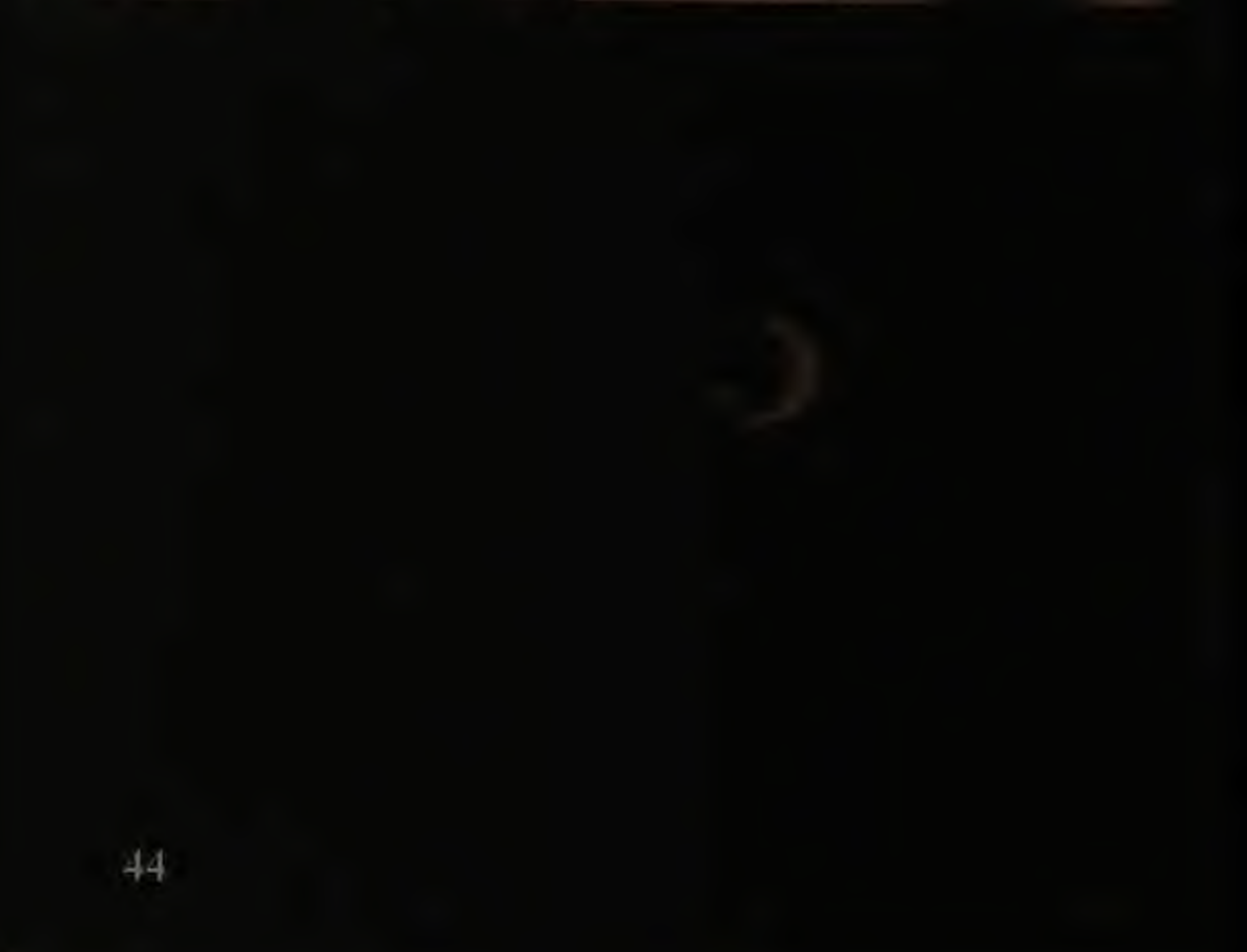

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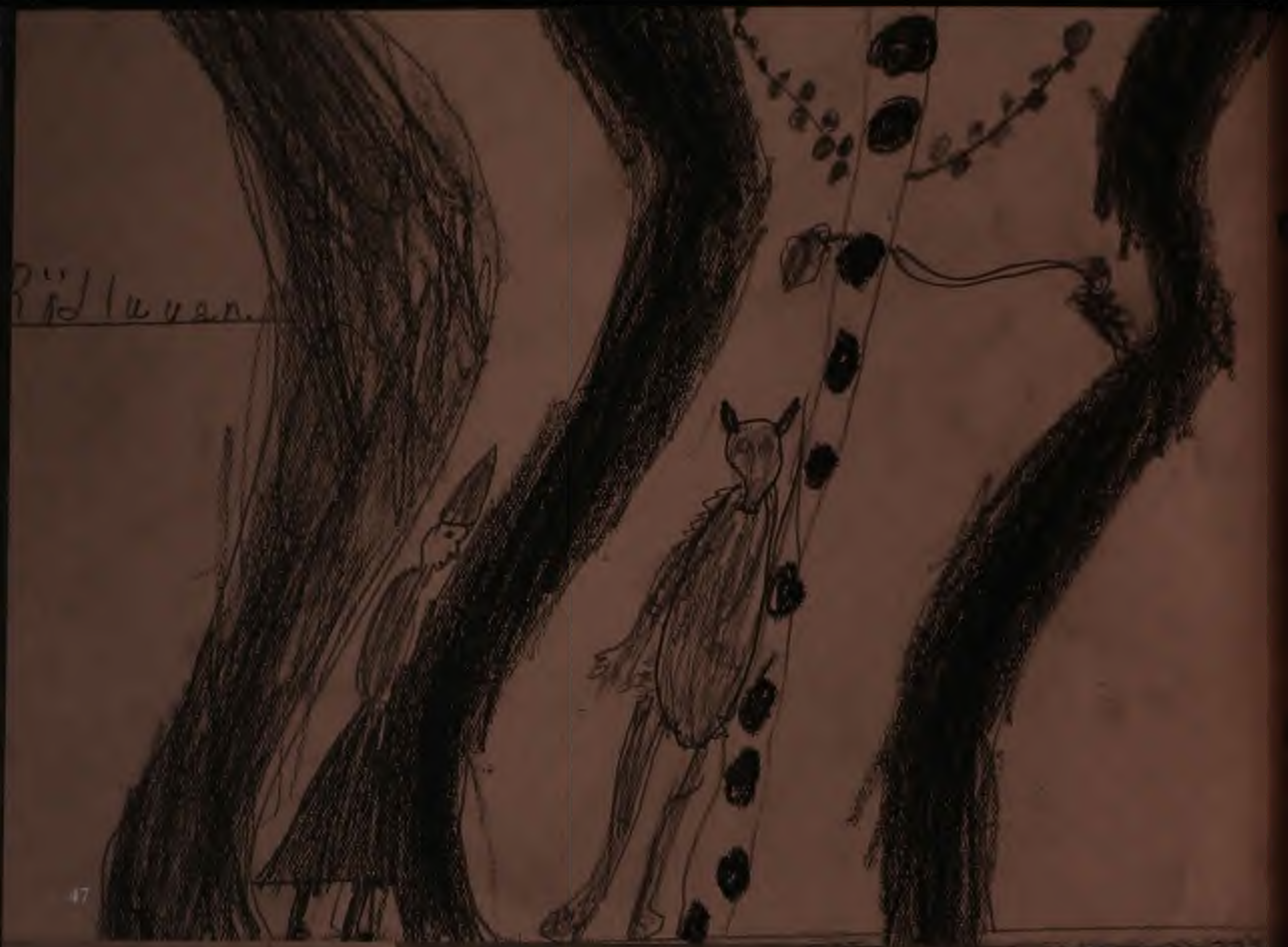

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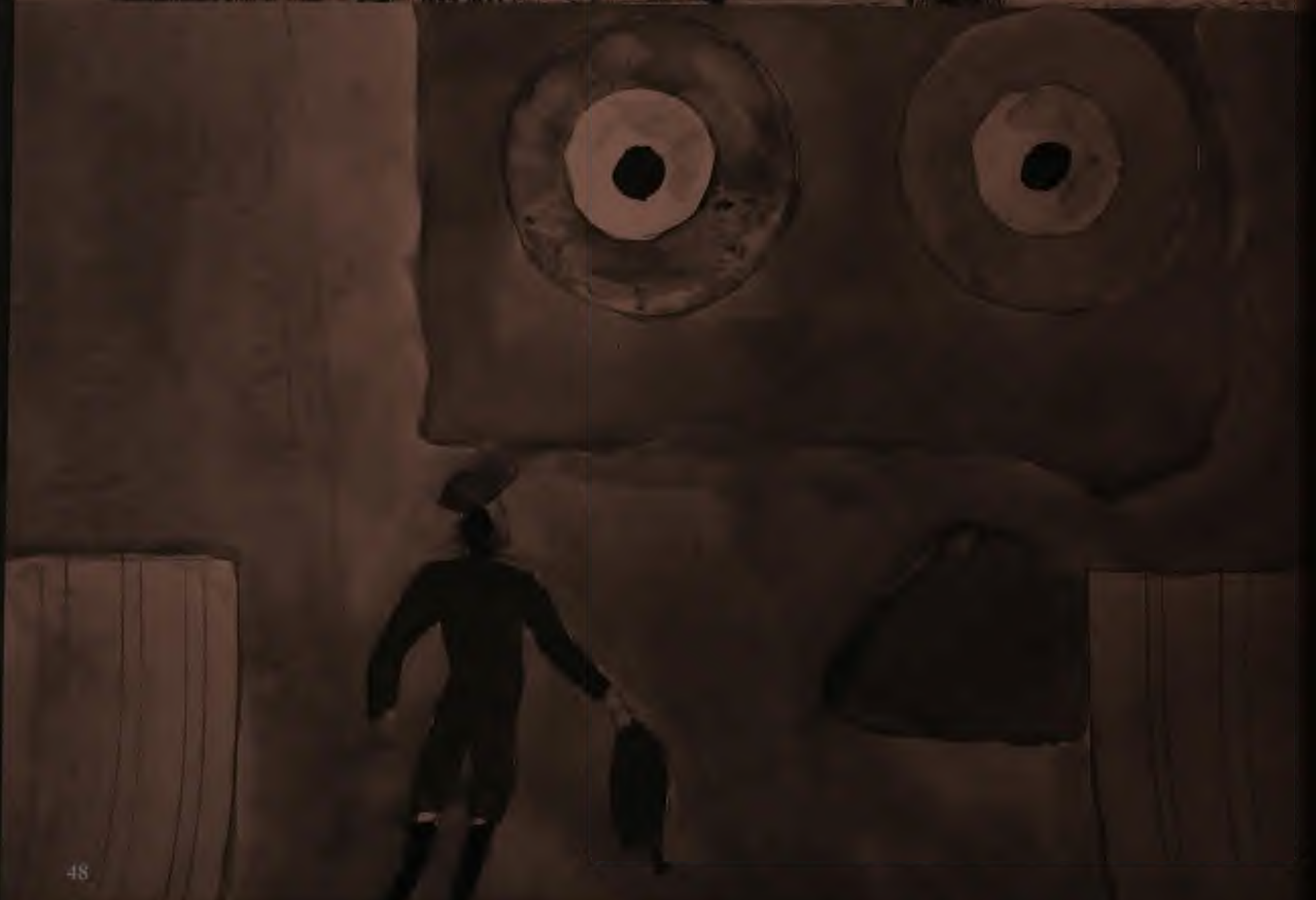

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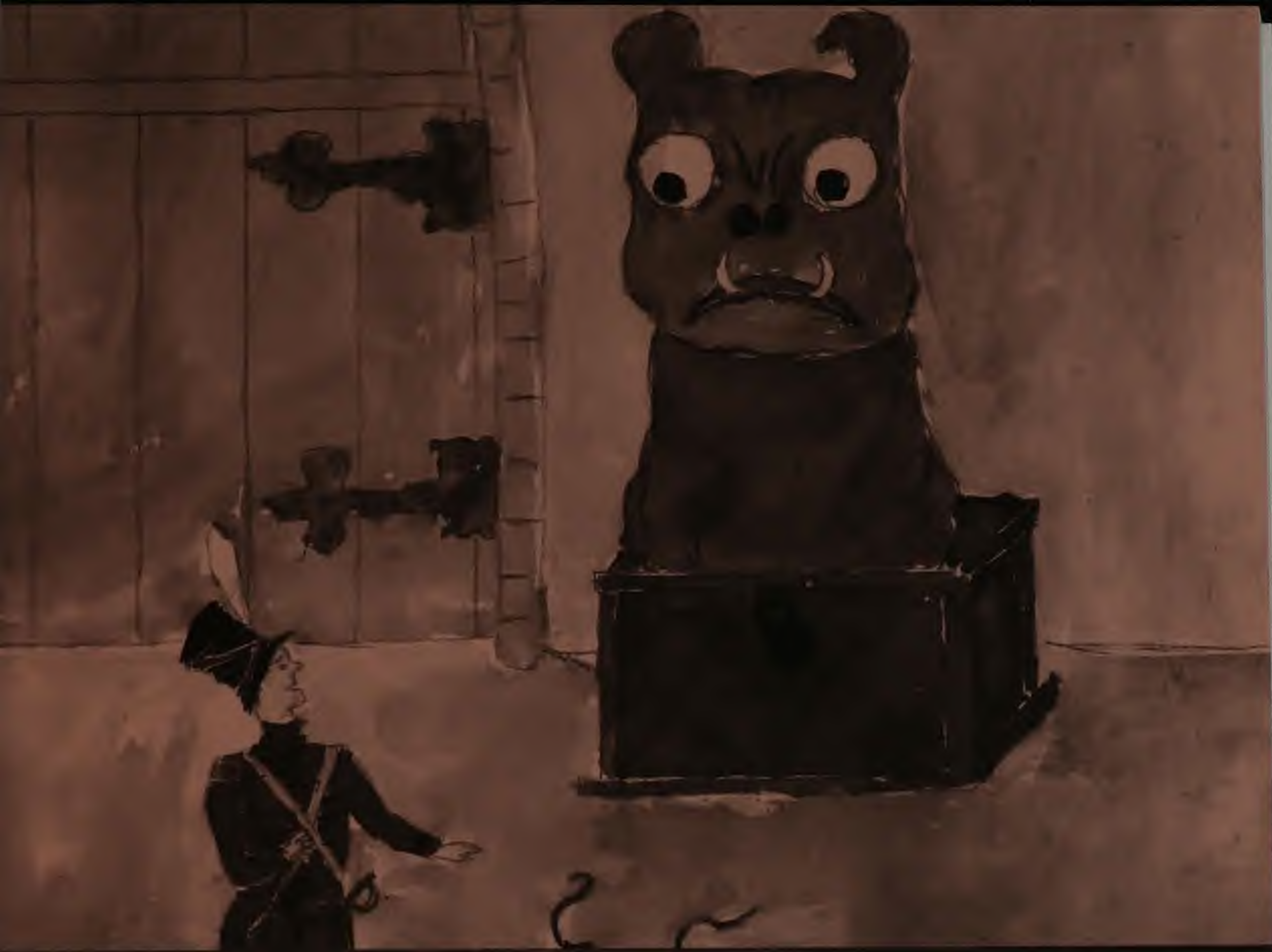

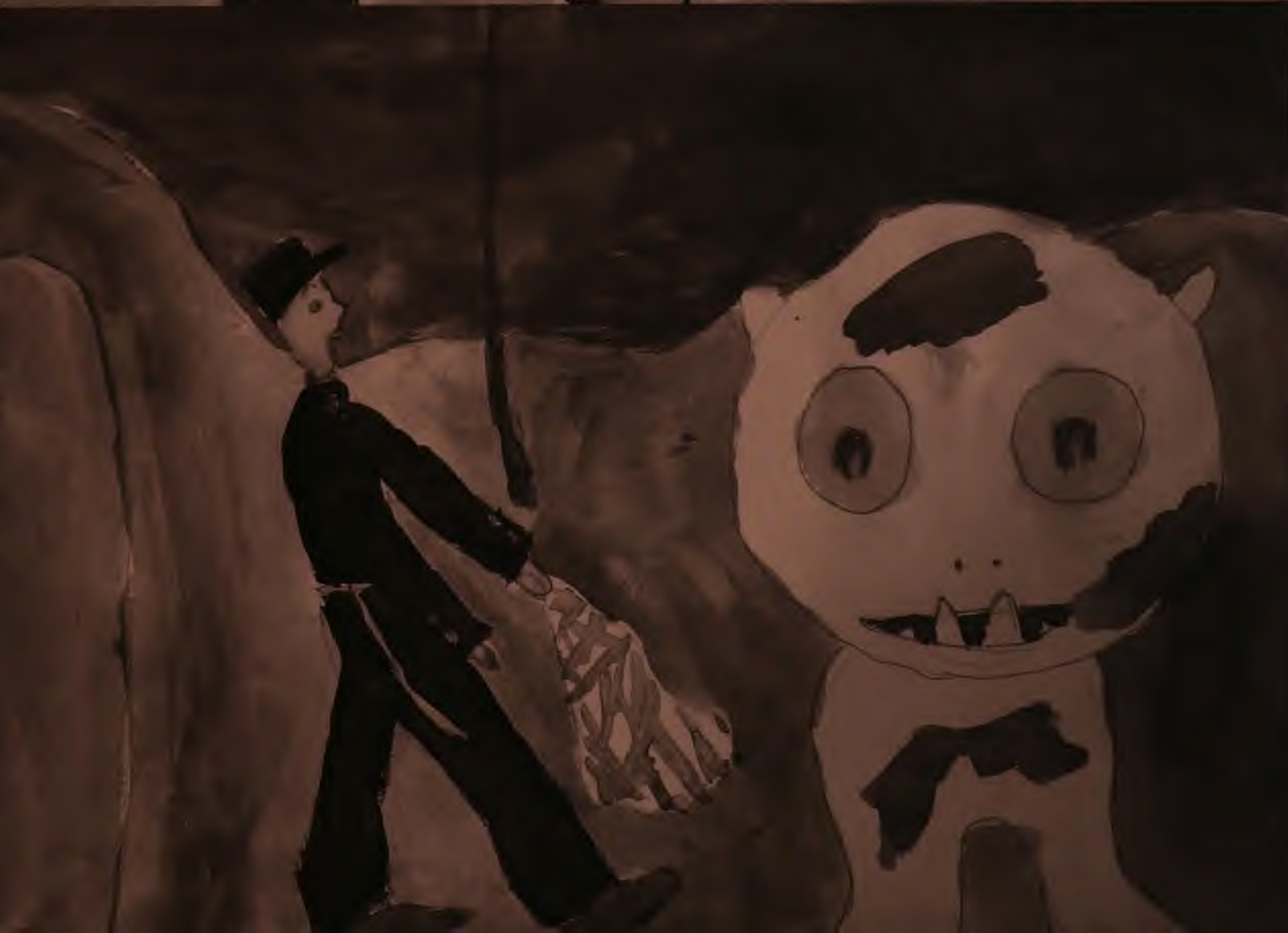

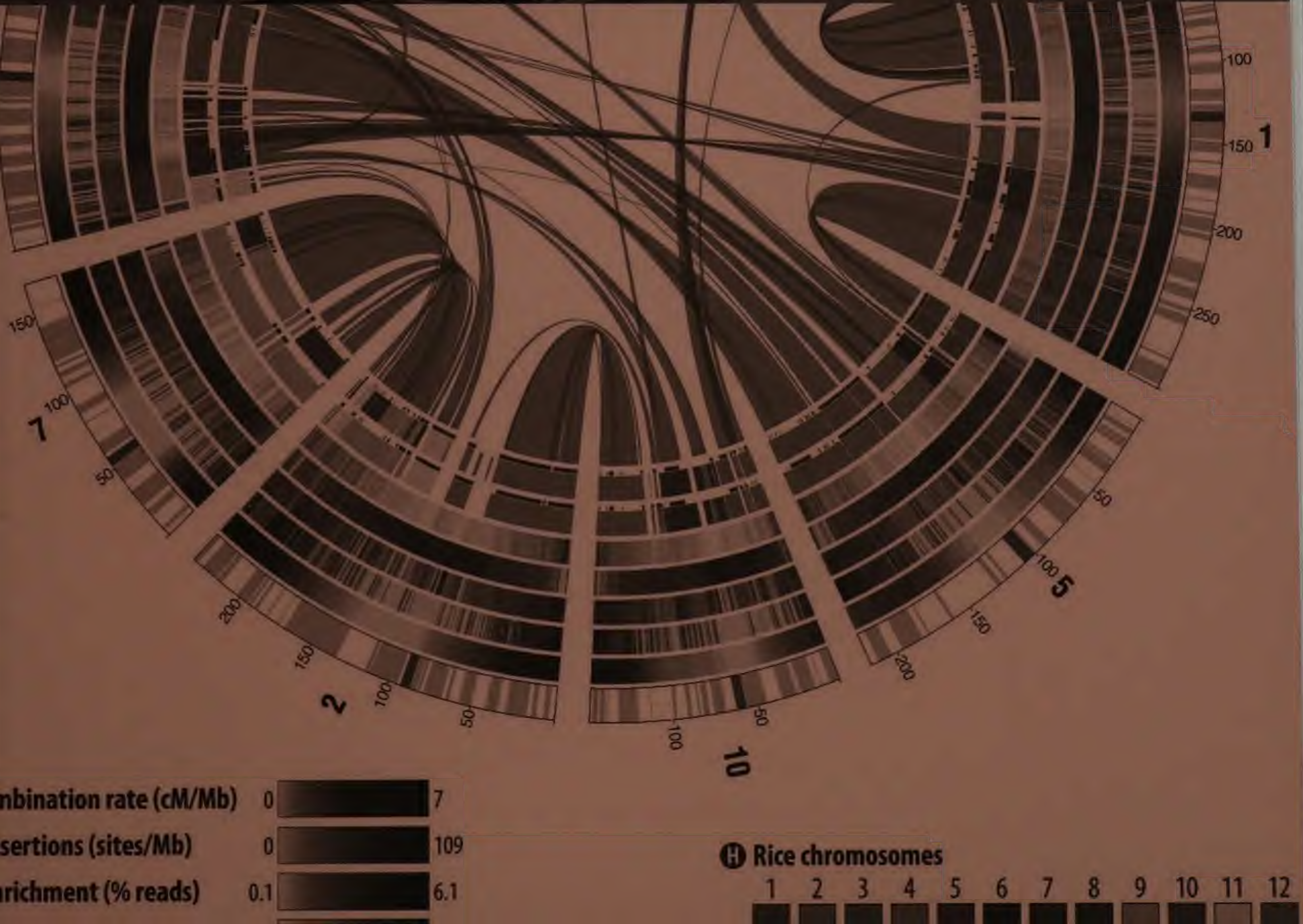
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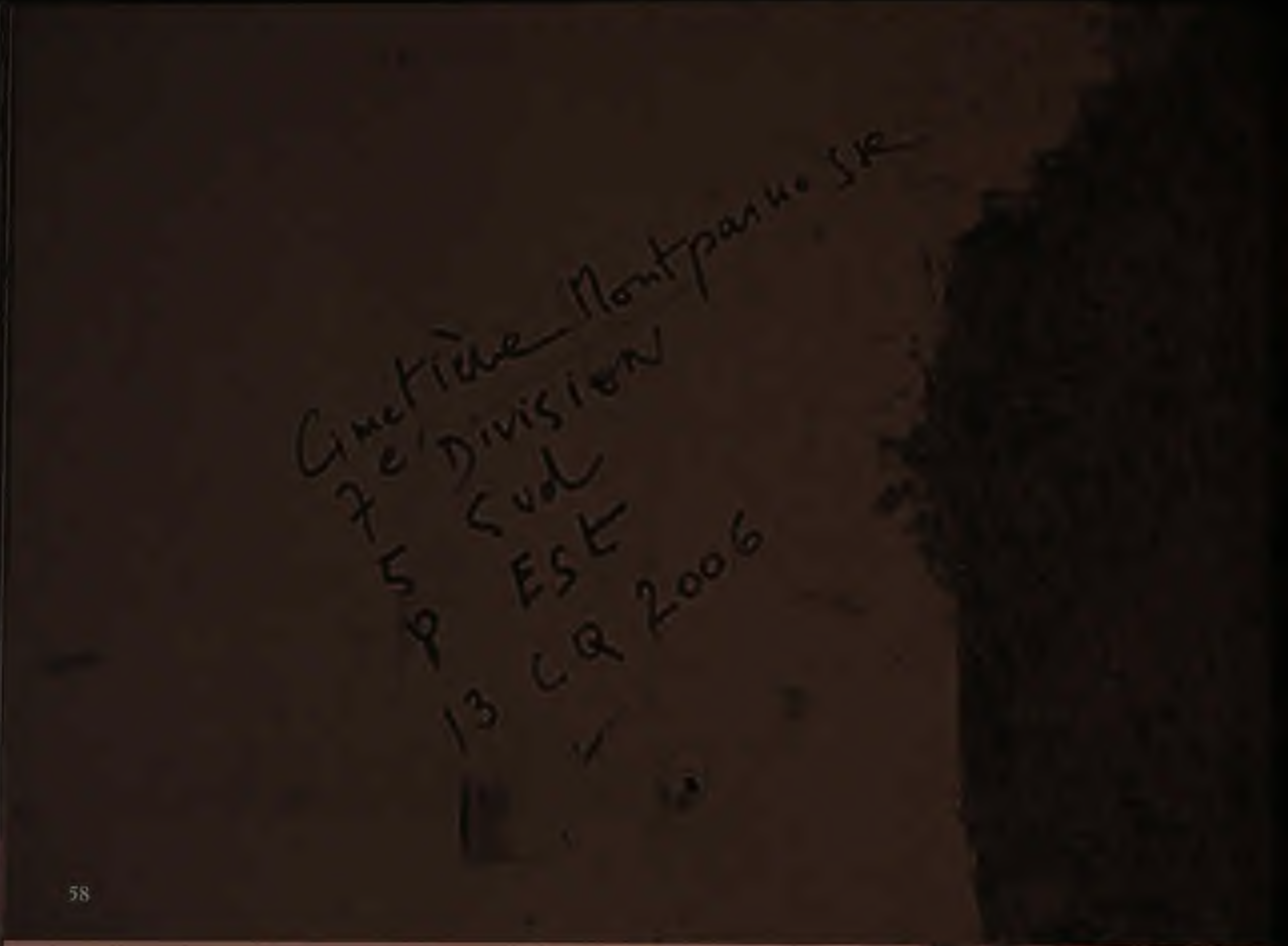
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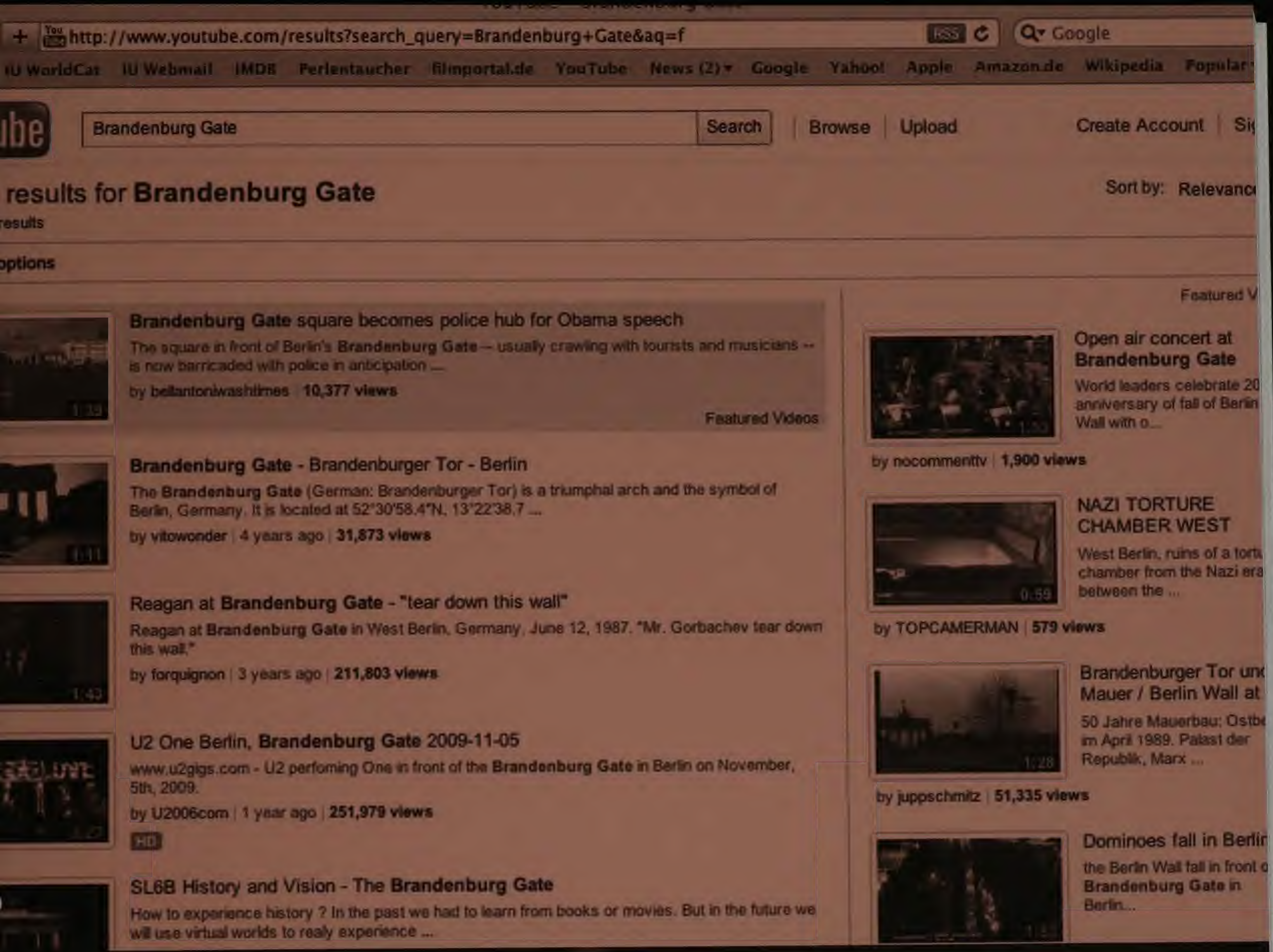
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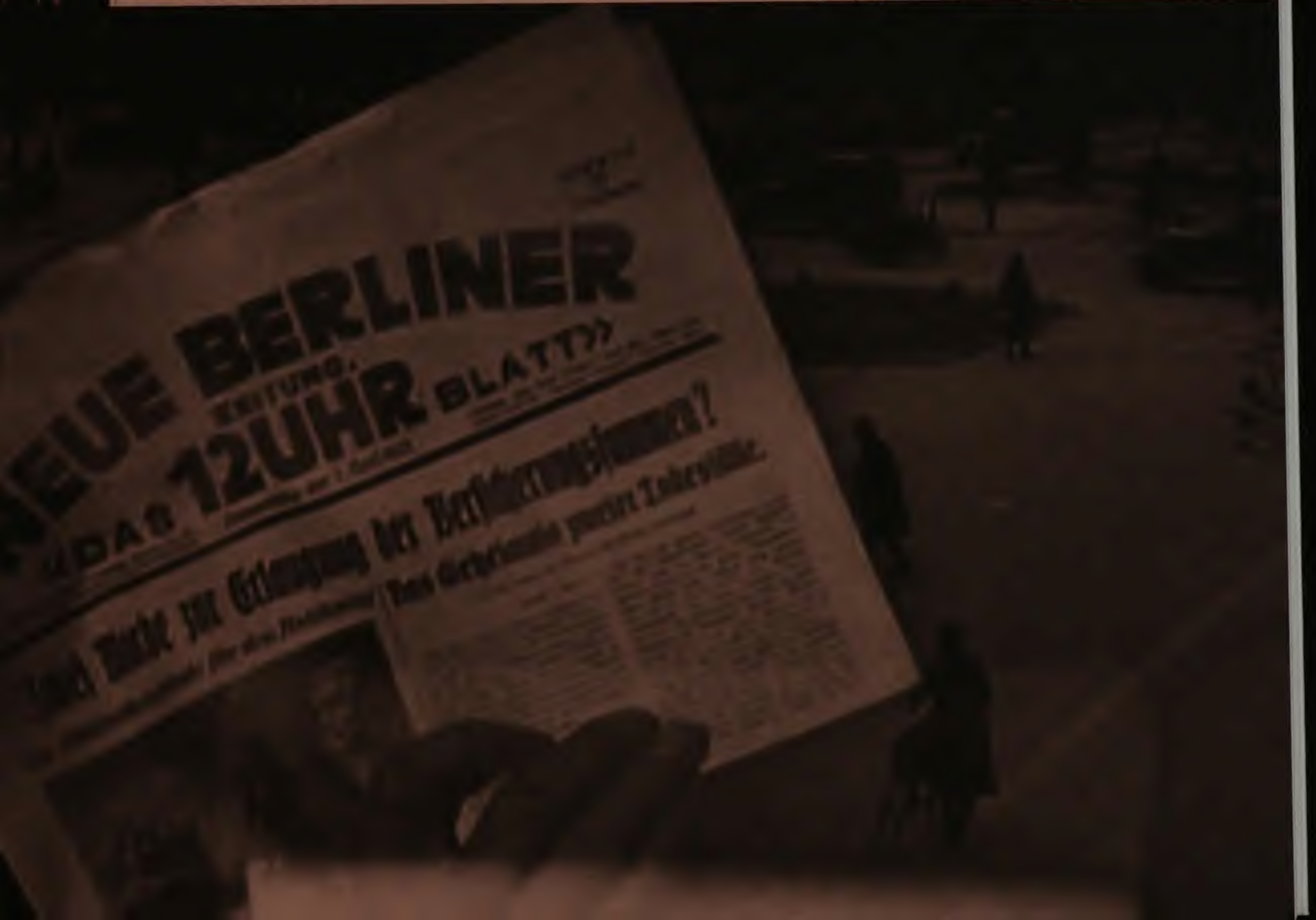
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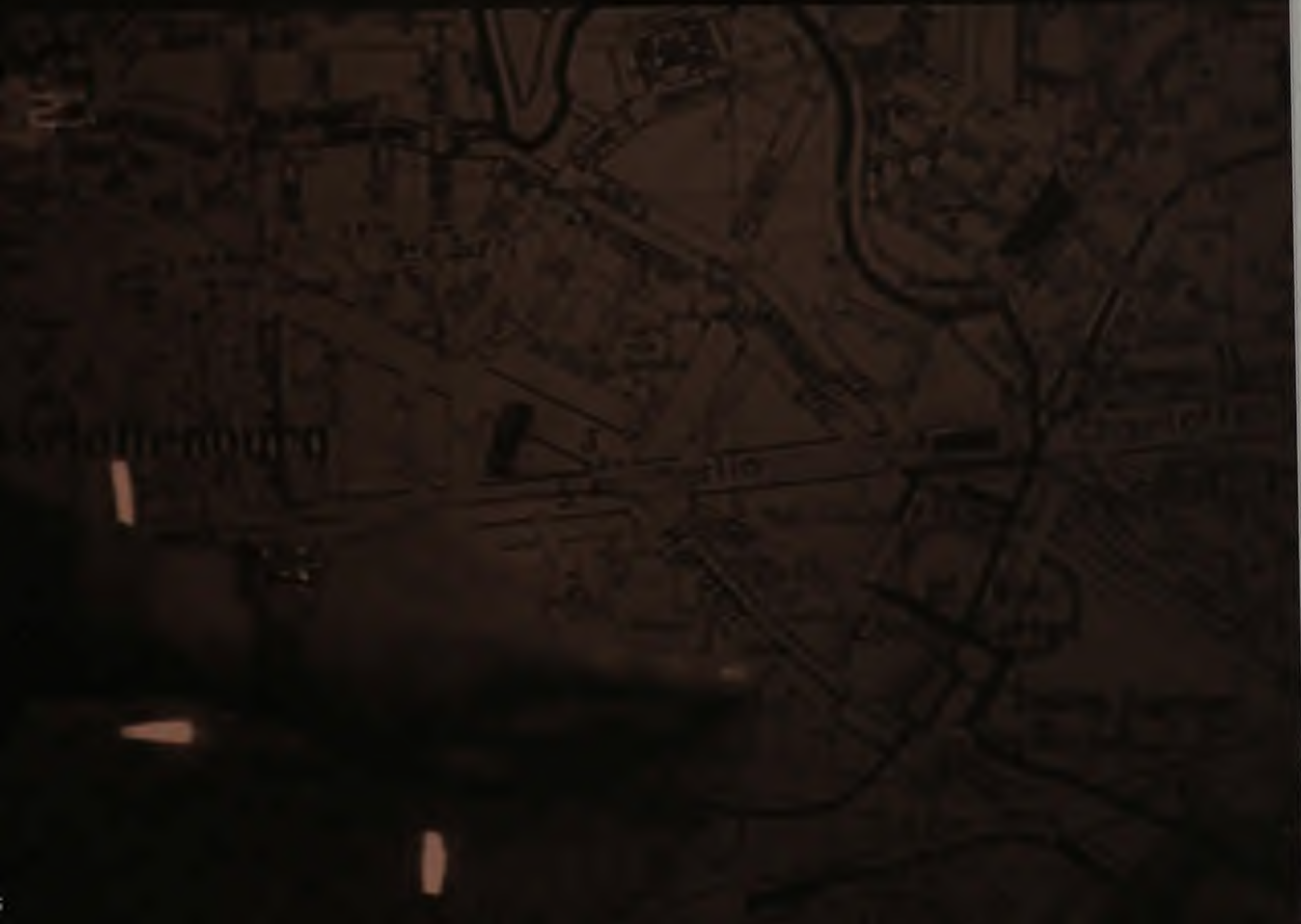

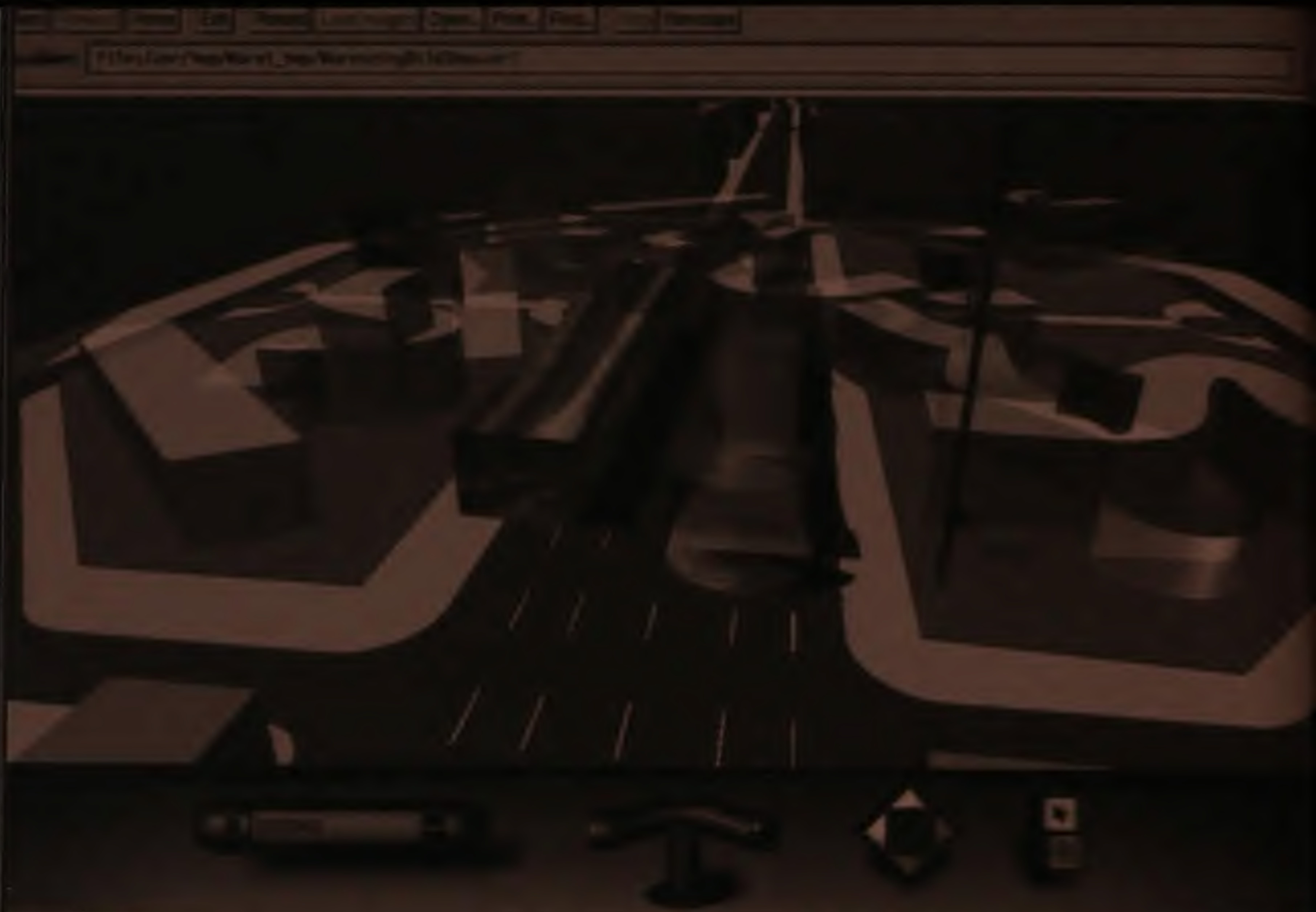

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1. Ivan Callus, Gloria Lauri-Lucente
2-23. Antonio Catolfi
24-45. Barbara Grespi, Alessandra Violi
46-50. Eirik Frisvold Hanssen
51-53. Jürgen Keiper
54-59. Marlène Monteiro
60-67. Brigitta B. Wagner
68-74. Matthias Wittmann

Temenuga Trifonova, York University of Toronto

Archiving Time in the Post-Medium Condition

In *The Emergence of Cinematic Time* Mary Ann Doane theorizes an epistemological break at the turn of the 19th century, reflected in new ways of thinking about contingency, indexicality, temporality, and chance. "The reverberations of this break," she argues, "are still perceptible today in the continual conjunction of electronic technologies and questions of instantaneity and the archivability of time."[1] In what follows I would like to explore the notions of "indexicality" and "archiving time" in the post-indexical and post-medium condition through an analysis of the work of three contemporary photographers: Barbara Probst, Uta Barth, and Jeff Wall. That their photography, which relies on tripods, large formats and slow deliberation, has come into such prominence at a time when we are bombarded with nostalgia-infused pronouncements of the imminent death of cinema can perhaps be attributed to their attempt to archive time by exposing "the cinematic" *within* "the photographic." In other words, contemporary photography's turn toward cinema can be seen as a response to the waning of indexicality, an attempt to compensate for the evacuation of duration from digital cinema[2] by returning time to the still image.

Traditionally, photography has been aligned with stillness and film with movement i.e. the two media have been distinguished by their different temporalities. Photography is fetishistic (Metz) and has a privileged relation to the past; its traumatic/melancholy effect is built into its semiotic structure (Thierry de Duve). Film, on the other hand, is voyeuristic and has a privileged relation to the present, which makes it incapable of producing what Barthes, in *Camera Lucida*, describes as the *punctum* of the still image: the essence of photography is the Intractable, its quality of "this has been" and "this was now" whereas cinema cannot put us in contact with the "Intractable" i.e. with death. Over the last couple of decades, however, photography and cinema have been engaged in a process of mutual mimicking that complicates such medium-specific claims. Cinema mimics photography by "slowing down" the image and even eliminating movement altogether.[3] While a strong investment in slowness and stillness has always been characteristic of the cinematic avant-garde, film's turn toward photography really gained momentum in the wake of the "digital turn," for instance in works like

Douglas Gordon's *24 Hour Psycho*, James Coleman's *La Tache Aveugle*, and Sam Taylor-Wood's *Pieta*. On the other hand, contemporary photography mimics cinema by spatializing and narrativizing time in works of increasing temporal complexity. Probst's "serialized instant," Barth's "the long now" and Wall's "cinematography" (staged photography) challenge the notion of the still image as instantaneous by exposing the cinematic within the photographic; however, even as their work returns time to the still image by exposing its non-identity with itself, it also evacuates all contingency from the still photograph. Although Probst, Barth and Wall are deeply concerned with issues of indexicality, temporality, legibility, and automatism – the same concerns that dominated the end of the 19th century – their photography is *about* "indexicality" i.e. it is a response to the anxiety over its potential disappearance, and perhaps for that reason it does not provoke in us a feeling of ontological restlessness. The ambivalent place these works occupy with respect to indexicality reflects the increasing *theoretical ambivalence* surrounding the notion of indexicality. As we shall see, recent theoretical engagements with indexicality and the archivability of time reveal a subtle shift in the traditional understanding of this concept, not only in the work of theorists who believe digital photography and cinema to be just extensions of their analog counterparts, but also in the work of those who have tried to salvage the notion of medium specificity and to underscore the differences between the analog and the digital.

The Emergence of Cinematic Time is perhaps the most exhaustive study of indexicality and archival desire.[4] Throughout her book Doane locates the index on the threshold of semiosis: contingency, indexicality and illegibility are understood in terms of photography's and cinema's capacity to record a plenitude of information irreducible to signification. However, in the final pages Doane reminds us that

> *the index is evacuated of content; it is a hollowed-out sign. […] Hence, indexicality together with its seemingly privileged relation to the referent – to singularity and contingency – is available to a range of media. The insistency and compulsion Peirce associates with the indexical sign are certainly attributes of television and digital media as well; witness the televisual obsession with the 'live' coverage of catastrophe, the ultimate representation of contingency, chance, the instantaneous, as well as the logistics of the Internet which promises to put diversity, singularity and instantaneity more fully within our grasp.*[5]

Here "contingency" becomes conflated with the unpredictability of natural catastrophes, while "instantaneity," no longer a temporal category, signifies the ease with which we access information. Perhaps more importantly, by aligning the digital with the after-image, which she posits as a natural aspect of human vision, Doane suggests that the digital might indeed be pre-figured by, or inherent in, perception. At first, she claims the afterimage and the indexical sign stake out different relations to referentiality: "After looking at a bright object and then looking away, one will see an afterimage whether the original bright object continues to exist or not. […] The concept of the index, on the other hand, seems to acknowledge the invasion of semiotic systems by the real."[6] However, she then reminds us that perception is never instantaneous but "pivots upon a temporal lag, a superimposition of images, an inextricability of past and present."[7] If perception is always, to a certain degree, independent of its referent, on account of this inherent delay, then the digital's complete independence from its referent only extends, or makes visible, the temporal lag: the "After-image" pre-figures the digital image inasmuch as both exemplify the movement "away from referentiality and toward subjectivization of vision."[8] The anxiety produced by the digital is then not inherent in new technologies of representation: it's caused by our realization that new technologies materialize the inherent instability or virtuality of the body, a body that cannot even trust its own senses. In the face of such a body, "the desire for instantaneity emerges as a guarantee of a grounded referentiality. […] [Photography and cinema] become forms of prosthetic devices that compensate for a flawed body."[9] Ultimately, Doane implies that "the index is not necessarily synonymous with referentiality" because a temporal tension, in the form of delay, is inherent in the index:

> *Yet the index also harbours within itself a temporal tension. On the one hand, the indexical trace – the footprint, the fossil, the photograph – carries a historicity, makes the past present. At the other extreme, the deictic index – the signifiers 'here,' 'now,' 'this,' 'that' – are inextricable from the idea of presence.*[10]

Adopting a pragmatic position, in "What Is the Point of an Index?" Tom Gunning seeks to demonstrate that the digital and the indexical are not mutually exclusive by proposing that the index is meaningless or useless outside of the visual accuracy or recognisability of the image. He suggests a re-reading of Peirce's system of signs, arguing that indexiality cannot be separated from considerations of visual accuracy against Peirce's claim that the indexical and the iconic function of a sign must be considered independent of each other. For Gunning the fascination we feel when confronted with a photograph stems not from any desire to know how it was made (whether it has a real referent or not) but rather from our ability to *recognize* its visual resemblance to a referent (however different it might be from it):

> *[T]he power of the digital (or even the traditional photographic) to 'transform' an image depends on maintaining something of the original image's visual accuracy and recognizability. I use this phrase ('visual accuracy and recognizability') to indicate the manner in which indexicality intertwines with iconicity in our common assessment of photographs.*[11]

Gunning challenges the usefulness of the notion of indexicality by downplaying the photograph's semiotic structure and foregrounding its phenomenology:

> *It is only by a phenomenological investigation of our investment in the photographic image (digital or otherwise obtained) that I think we can truly grasp the drive behind digitalization and why photography seems unlikely to disappear. [...] I am positing a phenomenological fascination with photography that involves a continuing sense of a relation between the photograph and a preexisting reality. While this is precisely what 'indexicality' supposedly involves, I am less and less sure this semiotic term provides the proper (or sufficient) term for the experience.*[12]

The knowledge of how the photograph was produced (the indexical relation to a real object guaranteed by the light bouncing off the object), argues Gunning, cannot explain our fascination with it. An indexical relation "falls entirely into the rational realm"[13] and thus cannot account for the photograph's "irrational power to bear away our faith."[14] Gunning urges us to revisit Barthes and Bazin, both of whom conceived of the photograph as an image without a code (Barthes) that puts us in the presence of something (Bazin). However, contrary to Barthes and Bazin, Gunning claims that the qualities that make the photograph fascinating are not necessarily those related to indexicality i.e. temporality. Instead, he emphasizes the photograph's "sense of a nearly inexhaustible visual richness," the delight in visual illusion it provokes, and its ability to put us in the presence of something that is not necessarily a real referent: qualities we recognize as essential to the digital, rather than the analog, image.

In *The Virtual Life of Film* Rodowick challenges Gunning's reduction of indexicality to perceptual realism. Analog images function through transcription, primarily a temporal process, while digital images function through calculation or conversion: they do not provoke an experience of the intensity of time but merely measure time as the conversion of light into code: "The primary sense of every photograph is that it is a *spatial record of duration* [...] Capturing a cone of light involves opening *a window of time*."[15] On the contrary,

> *the technological criteria of perceptual realism [wrongly] assume [...] that the primary powers of photography are spatial semblance. [...] The concept of realism in use by computer graphics professionals [...] does not correspond to an ordinary*

> *spatial sense of the world and actual events taking place within it, but rather to our perceptual and cognitive norms for apprehending a represented space, especially a space that can be represented or constructed according to mathematical notation.*[16]

Paradoxically, Rodowick, like Doane, ends up effacing the distinction between analog and digital he is supposedly trying to uphold by underscoring cinema's inherent virtuality. Rodowick returns to Metz who

> *distinguishes between film as actual or a concrete discursive unity, and cinema as an ideal set. This distinction launches us toward another sense of the virtuality of film and film theory. [...] Within the filmic, the cinematographic inscribes itself as vast virtuality [...] [through] the notion of cinematic codes.*[17]

Individual films are concrete and singular while cinematic codes are virtual: "[T]he quality of being cinematic in no way derives from the physical nature of the signifier."[18] Medium specificity does not originate in the materiality of the cinematic signifier: a code "is a constructed rather than inherent unity, and it does not exit prior to analysis."[19] Thus cinema exists as a *conceptual virtuality*, of which analog cinema is just one particular instance. On the other hand, cinema's inherent virtuality is a function of its hybridity as both a temporal and a spatial medium. Unsettling the conceptual categories of 18th and 19th century aesthetics, cinema, defined as the presence of something spatially and temporally absent, was from the beginning "among the most temporal, and therefore virtual, of the arts:"[20] its "twofold virtuality [is] defined by a vertiginous spatialization of time and 'temporalization' of space."[21] By treating the digital as the virtual life of the analog, and by emphasizing the ontological undergroundedness of cinema – by implying that even the index cannot ground it – Rodowick downplays the rupture between the two, suggesting that the digital and the index are not mutually exclusive.

Finally, in "Digital Editing and Montage: the Vanishing Celluloid and Beyond" Martin Lefebvre and Marc Furstenau argue that insofar as digital images "are made in the hope of being interpreted as photographic"[22] they should be considered indexical: their "index" is photography rather than reality.[23] In order to demonstrate that every sign is indexical the authors analyze a realist painting of a house represented in a way that allows us to read it as a sign of domesticity:

> *The hypothesis is that houses of this sort really belong to our concept of domesticity. The house in the picture is thus conceived as belonging to a class of experiential objects i.e. as being indexically 'connected' to that class by contiguity. Moreover, if the house really exists, then the painting can be seen to have been determined by the existence of a house belonging to the class of objects falling under the concept of domesticity. If, on the contrary, it is a mere figment of the painter's imagination, still it is its connection to other existing houses belonging to the class of objects falling under the concept of domesticity that has partly determined it.*[24]

Here indexicality is defined conceptually: the house functions as an indexical sign merely by virtue of belonging to a general *type* – houses, existent or imaginary – which fall under the *concept* of domesticity. The authors argue that this example "illustrates that every sign, whether it be about some individual existent or about a general type, requires indexicality. [...] In short, all signs, including digital images and cinematic fictions, should they mean anything, are to be understood ultimately as [...] indexically connected to reality."[25] Here indexicality is conflated with legibility: if a sign is legible it must be (because it is) indexical. All signs are automatically indexical because indexicality is merely

> *the semiotic function by which a sign indicates or points to its object. [...] Now any given object, whether it be a photograph, a film, a painting, or a CGI is connected with the world (or Reality) in an unlimited number of ways, all of which are ways in which it can serve as an index. Thus it makes no sense to say, for instance, that a traditional photograph is more (or less) indexical than a digital image since we cannot quantify the number of ways in which a given thing can serve as a sign.*[26]

Like Gunning, Lefebvre and Furstenau propose temporality as just one of the many ways in which a sign can function indexically: an index does not have to be a trace (an imprint of a past moment). Indeed, they go as far as to suggest that there is an entire spectrum of different *degrees of indexicality*, including direct and indirect indexicality, "an index of artistry" and "an index of style" being examples of the latter.

Theoretical discussions of indexicality have been shifting away from a strictly semiotic analysis to a phenomenological analysis of the index in terms of *affect.*[27] Thierry de Duve urges us to consider the psychological response produced by the photograph's illogical temporality rather than the semiotics of the index: "What is in question here is the *affective and phenomenological* involvement of the unconscious with the external world, rather than its linguistic structure."[28] The illogical conjunction of "the here and the formerly," which results in the sudden vanishing of the present tense, accounts for the traumatic effect of the snapshot, while the time exposure's conjunction of "now and there" accounts for its melancholy effect.[29] Similarly, Doane understands the index no longer in terms of the deeply historical relationship to reality photography was said to guarantee by virtue of its automatism but in terms of the *affective response* – which she describes in terms of *intensity* – produced by *both analog and digital* images. The shift from "the index" to "the affective response to the index" points to a new understanding of indexicality as something *produced: now it is certain representations that guarantee an experience of intensity (i.e. indexicality) rather than the index serving as the representation's guarantee*. For instance, Doane notes that the indexical trace "as filmic inscription of contingency [...] indissociable from affect"[30] can take the form of cinephilia, "a kind of zero degree of spectatorship [that] 'doesn't do anything other than designate something which resists, which escapes existing networks of critical discourse and theoretical frameworks. [...] [C]inephilia hinges *not on indexicality but on the knowledge of indexicality's potential.*"[31]

Let us now examine how this growing ambivalence surrounding the notion of indexicality is reflected in the photography of Probst, Barth, and Wall. In *Exposures*[32] Probst uses as many as twelve cameras and tripods, arranged around the subject, to photograph multiple points of view captured in separate images but taken simultaneously with a single radio-controlled shutter release: extending a single moment into a series dramatizes the impossibility of instantaneous perception. The multiplication of points of view prevents the viewer from taking them in at a glance and imposes a time of reading. Although the multiple vantage points expose the multiplicity and heterogeneity of the instant, they also eliminate "the outside" by making the act of archiving time itself an object of representation: rather than the index being an imprint of the past, we literally see the instant inscribing itself, automatically producing its own record in the present. Probst exposes the cinematic within the photographic by using techniques we have come to associate with cinema as a time-based medium: suture, montage, shot reverse shot, variations in shot scale reminiscent of cinematic establishing shots, mediums shots, and close ups, elliptical editing, jump cuts, remakes/sequels. Each series of photographs is so meticulously staged that it takes a while before the viewer realizes what is missing from the photographs: the photographer's look. In the diptychs two subjects face two cameras set side by side: the shutters are released simultaneously, recording two "versions" of same moment. In *Exposure #23* a girl and a boy are looking at two cameras positioned in front of them. In each photograph, which records the same moment, they seem to be looking in different directions even though they haven't moved, and their facial expressions seem slightly different, which prompts the viewer to "read" the images as consecutive rather than simultaneous i.e. to narrativize them. Recalling both Kuleshov's psychological montage experiment ("the Kuleshov effect") as well as the jump cut, in which two sequential shots of the same subject are taken from camera positions that vary only slightly, Probst's diptychs expose montage, traditionally associated with cinema as a time-based medium, as inherent in the photograph. *Exposure #39* employs another familiar cinematic device, the green screen: a girl walks, in medium shot, in front of a Swiss Alps background, which in the next image, a long shot, is revealed to be fake. In the first image of *Exposure #44*, a medium shot, a woman runs in front of the camera against the backdrop of a mountain in Bavaria; the second image, a long shot, reveals the woman to be running in front of a painting of the mountain, the painting itself held up by another woman standing in front of the real mountain. The "reframing" reveals what we thought was real, to be fake, but then re-inscribes the fake back into the real. The diptych exposes the real and the fake as interchangeable: the fake can pass for the real but the real can also pass for the fake, inverting the logic of the cinematic green screen.

Exposure #9 shows a woman walking through Central Station as various people pass her by. The series consists of two black and white images and four colour ones. One of the images shows two of the photographers taking pictures of the woman: the pictures they produce are among the six making up the series. The arrangement of the images resembles a film sequence made up of establishing shot, medium shots, and close ups. The changes in camera angle, distance, and lighting narrativize the instant, infusing it with time: one image seems to record a moment before the woman passes by, another "after" she passes by, i.e. spatial extension produces temporal extension. The effect is similar to that produced by elliptical editing, which extends an action's screen time beyond its real time. The same effect – creating a sense of "before" and "after" – can be observed in *Exposure #11a* and *#11b*. In the first diptych a woman and a little girl holding her hand are crossing the street. The first image is shot from a street level and gives us a close up of the girl; only parts of the woman's body are visible in the shot. The second image is shot from a high vantage point, most likely from a building across the street. In *#11b* a woman is biking across the street: the first image is a colour medium shot, the second one is a black and white long shot. In both diptychs the variation in scale creates a sense of temporal variation; in both, as well, the archiving of time has devolved into a surveillance of time (hence the forensic connotations of the titles of all photographs: *numbered exposures* that mimic forensic evidence).

On several occasions Probst returns to the same subjects and the same places, months or years after she has first photographed them, producing photographic remakes or sequels. In *Exposure #41* she returns to the same couple she shot a year earlier. The difference in the subjects' facial expressions from the first to the second series is superimposed onto the difference in their facial expressions within the same series. Since the two subjects *already* appear so different within the same moment, merely on account of the slight change in camera angle, we are less likely to believe that they would be dramatically different from themselves after a year has passed. Time collapses onto itself: it does not need to pass or unfold in order for difference to emerge since each moment already differs from itself. *Exposure #27* is a "sequel" to *Exposure #16*: both series are shot in the same hallway and seem to feature the same subject, though we see only the lower part of her body lying on the floor. The change in camera angle produces two different versions of the same moment: the first seems to represent the woman's point of view shot, while the second could be attributed to her attacker, or perhaps to a policeman investigating what appears to be a scene of domestic violence.

Probst's triptychs suture the viewer into the illusion of a self-produced space and time: each photograph in the series is taken by a photographer represented in one of the other images in the same series, collapsing the distinction between subjects and objects of representation. In *Exposure #32*, featuring two women and one man photographing one another, the first image is produced by the man represented in the third image, and the second image is produced by the woman represented in the third image. Every point of view shot includes the subject who produced it, mimicking the cinematic technique of shot reverse shot. The triptychs set off an apparently infinite yet finite circulation of looks between the images without ever opening up to the world outside: the images appear to be produced by no one. Within each series *time re-circulates rather than flows.* The inherent automatism of the photographic medium becomes an object of representation: indexicality is "preserved" in the form of self-reference. In other words, Probst's exposures archive the spectator's time: *it is the spectator that now functions as the index of the image.*

Uta Barth's photographs in *The Long Now*[33] challenge the long history of the *point* in photographic discourse: de Duve identifies "the point of sharpness" as essential to the breakdown of the symbolic function in the photograph; Cartier-Bresson speaks of "the decisive moment" also in terms of a point; Roland Barthes builds his phenomenology of photography around the Latin term for point, *punctum.* By contrast, Barth's multi-panel images hover on the brink of visibility and legibility. Her subject is the act of perception itself, the act of focusing, not what we focus on. According to Barthes, even when I try to focus on the surface of a photograph, I eventually pass through it to that which really fascinates me: the photograph's referent: as he puts it, "the referent adheres." In Barth's images, however, the referent does not adhere. The choice of a subject is no choice, she claims; the real "referent" are the conditions of seeing: "The more important data of perception [...] as disclosed in her images, are transitions, overlappings, indistinct limits, inconsistencies, depositionings, and vacancies [i.e.] those conditions of vision which make perception non-identical with itself."[34] Although Barth's images are very different from Probst's, her vision is equally self-effacing: Jonathan Crary describes it as "a non-punctual seeing in that it functions without seeking points of focus, climax, or attraction,"[35] an "anonymous seeing [...] that labours to free itself from the [...] confines of subjectivity."[36]

The images in the *Ground* series collapse the figure/ground distinction by eliminating the nominal subject of the photograph and making the background the subject not by bringing in into focus but by keeping it out of focus. The images are focused "but on empty areas – focused on air, or focused on things off to the side in some way."[37] The images in the *Field* series, shot mostly outdoors, mimic cinematic framing conventions in a subtle investigation of the visual structures that imply movement or activity in the foreground. The subjects – e.g. car headlights shining through falling rain – are "unspecific, generic places. The real subject [...] is the atmosphere itself."[38] In the series *...and of time* (2000) Barth's attention "shifts away from the light outside toward the light that streams in. Now she is entirely contained within her house, and her attention is focused on nothing more than the light from outside as it enters the space, and how it moves and changes."[39] Just as Antonioni often lets his camera wander off, "forgetting" the character it is supposed to follow and instead following some insignificant, irrelevant, unexpressive detail of the environment, Barth "archives" everything: not just the image but also the afterimage; not a particular space, but "any-space-whatever," a term Deleuze employs to describe Antonioni's distracted camera. The images in the series *white blind (bright red)* (2002) are "rooted in prolonged staring and the optical afterimages it can produce."[40] Barth pans with the camera to produce slightly different points of view of the same unfocused subject; in her diptychs she alternates between close ups and long shots of the same subject. Rather than multiplying the same moment until it seems like different moments (Probst), she records different moments that appear to be the same on account of the almost imperceptible difference between the vantage points from which the same subject is shot, always out of focus. Extending time into *The long now* and keeping her images out of focus, Barth mimics the freedom and contingency of the cinematic long take. Inasmuch as her images evacuate the nominal subject of a photograph, that which is supposed to leave its imprint in the image, they do not make a past moment present but render present that which renders the past present, namely light.

The physical support of Jeff Wall's "medium" is the large-scale photographic color transparency mounted in an aluminum box illuminated from behind by fluorescent light. The physical basis of the work is photography, but its presentation in an aluminum box and backlit is derived from commercial advertising. Wall's large scale photographs (e.g. *Milk, No, Bad Goods, Eviction Struggle*) are structured dramatically like movies. The cinematic aspect of his work reveals itself, as well, in his interest in "micro-gestures" (e.g. *Mimic)*, which well up from the social, collective unconscious. These "micro-gestures," revealing thought precisely through their extreme economy,[41] recall Cavell's cinematic "somatograms." Wall stages his scenes in studio space constructed at his direction to create a particular kind of interior, or on locations in or near Vancouver that he searches out as would a film director. The persons appearing in the pictures are performers hired and directed by him, and they are rehearsed to achieve the effects he seeks. The large scale and drama of the transparencies have caused them to be described as cinematic, or, perhaps more accurately, as film stills. Their scale literally permits a number of viewers to experience them simultaneously, another feature shared with cinema.

For Wall the photograph's ontological status is always unfixed or spectral. Even his most "realistic" works, he claims, are "populated with spectral characters whose state of being [is] not that fixed. That, too, is an inherent aspect, or effect, of what I call 'cinematography:' things don't have to really exist, or to have existed, to appear in the picture. [...] Depiction is an act of construction; *it brings the referent into being*."[42] Without completely rejecting photography's indexical claim, Wall maintains that photography cannot be reduced to it. His way of working through this problem is

> *to make photographs that somehow suspend the factual claim while simultaneously continuing to create certain illusions of factuality. One of the ways [he does this is] by a kind of mimesis or simultaneous imitation of other art forms, painting and film in particular, each of which has a history of querying and subverting documentary claims.*[43]

The fusion of performance and reportage is one of the distinguishing characteristics of Wall's work. Manovich's observation that digital cinema is not a recording medium but a sub-genre of painting, inasmuch as it returns to the hand-painted and hand-animated images of cinema's pre-history, applies equally to Wall's digital "cinematography:" "Digital technology allows you to put different pieces together after the shooting is finished, so it is something like film editing [...]. By opening up the photographic moment, the computer begins to blur the boundaries between the forms and creates a new threshold zone which interests me greatly."[44]

Here Wall talks of the digital as blurring the boundaries between photography and painting by means of cinema i.e. by "opening up the photographic moment" to "temporalization" and narrativization. According to Rosalind Krauss, one of his most vocal critics, Wall wrongly assumes that the *now* of the photograph can be endlessly narrativized and thematized. Krauss argues that the discourse of photography is not aesthetic: with art's entry into a "post-conceptual" and "post-medium" age, photography stops functioning as a medium, becoming instead a "theoretical object," a tool for deconstructing artistic practice.[45] In the "post-conceptual," "post-medium" age the only possible use of photography is the reinvention, not the restoration, of a medium. She laments the failure of Wall's supporters to analyze his medium by treating him as having rehabilitated the medium of painting, thereby ignoring the fact that he is a photographer. For Krauss, Wall's work is really a restoration of painting in another medium: Wall turned to the history of painting and, with contemporary scenes and costumes, used photography to recapitulate well-known paintings created around the beginning of modernism. Furthermore, he reconstituted the pictorial unity of the old master *tableau*: thus, his images are diametrically opposed to the goal of fracturing imagery and disrupting the flow of narrative or the apparent intelligibility of a work of art. Wall, however, claims that his "cinematography" represents a return to, or a reclaiming of, the documentary or indexical aspect of photography: he thinks of works like *Milk*, *No*, *Bad Goods*, *Eviction Struggle*, which deal with aspects of documentary photography (*cinéma-vérité* camera style, non-professional actors, real locations) as examples of neo-realism.

The works discussed here are impossible to take in at a glance but impose "a time of reading" by means of self-reference, which exposes a single moment's difference from itself (Probst), by extending the present moment into a "long now" (Barth), or by enlarging the scale of the image and narrativizing it (Wall). While the digital continues to push in the direction of perceptual realism, contemporary photography seeks to reclaim the cinematic within the photographic, not by putting us in a deep, historical relation with time but by self-consciously reflecting on indexicality, automatism, and duration.

Notes

[1] Mary Ann Doane, *The Emergence of Cinematic Time: Modernity, Contingency, the Archive*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge 2002, p. 4.

[2] Rodowick argues, in relation to *Russian Arc*, that the digital long take cannot convey duration. David Norman Rodowick, *The Virtual Life of Film*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge 2007, pp. 169-171.

[3] In *24 Hour Psycho* (1993) Gordon extends an entire time frame to that of a 24 hour day. Coleman's *La Tache Aveugle (The Blind Spot*, 1978-90) is a slide projection derived from a brief sequence, less than a second long, of the 1933 film.

[4] Mary Ann Doane, *The Emergence of Cinematic Time: Modernity, Contingency, the Archive*, cit.

[5] *Idem*, cit., p. 231.

[6] *Idem*, p. 70.

[7] *Idem*, p. 77.

[8] *Idem*, p. 70.

[9] *Idem*, pp. 80-81.

[10] *Idem*, p. 220.

[11] Tom Gunning, *What's the Point of an Index? or, Faking Photographs*, in Karen Beckman and Jean Ma (eds.), *Still Moving: Between Cinema and Photography*, Duke University Press, Durham 2008, p. 26.

[12] *Idem*, pp. 33-34.

[13] *Idem*, p. 36.

[14] *Ibidem*.

[15] David Norman Rodowick, *The Virtual Life of Film*, cit., p. 48.

[16] David Norman Rodowick, *The Virtual Life of Film*, cit., pp. 103-105; Rodowick concludes that we are now experiencing "an interesting mutation in our ontological relations with digital images. In its presumed correspondence with the viewer's cognitive and perceptual structures, perceptual realism retreats from the physical world, placing its bets on imaginative worlds" (David Norman Rodowick, *The Virtual Life of Film*, cit., p. 105). The starting point for Rodowick's discussion of the paradoxes of perceptual realism is Stephen Prince's essay on the development of computer graphics for narrative film, in which Prince "clearly implies that the viewer's audiovisual experience is not defined by phenomenological criteria as such; rather, both 'understanding' and 'experience' are defined by the mental or psychological work of cognitive schemata" (David Norman Rodowick, *The Virtual Life of Film*, cit., p. 102).

[17] *Idem*, pp. 17-18.

[18] *Idem*, p. 19.

[19] *Ibidem*.

[20] *Idem*, p. 21.

[21] *Idem*, p. 23.

[22] *Idem*, p. 19.

[23] Marc Furstenau, Martin Lefebvre, "Digital Editing and Montage: the Vanishing Celluloid and Beyond," in *Cinémas: Revue d'études cinématographiques*, no. 13 (1-2), 2002, pp. 69-107.

[24] *Idem*, p. 17.

[25] *Idem*, pp. 17-18.

[26] *Idem*, p. 18.

[27] Barthes had already made that connection with his notion of the *punctum* as unlocking the subject's deeply personal investment in the photograph.

[28] Thierry de Duve, *Time Exposure and Snapshot: The Photograph as Paradox*, in David Campany (ed.), *The Cinematic*, Whitechapel, London 2007, pp. 56.

[29] Since there is no clear distinction between the snapshot and the time exposure "one cannot decide on a shutter speed that would operate as a borderline between the two" (Thierry de Duve, *Time Exposure and Snapshot: The Photograph as Paradox, cit.*, p. 60), every photograph has built into its semiotic structure the trauma effect and the mourning process, i.e. every photograph gives rise to two opposing libidinal attitudes: melancholy (the response to the work of mourning) and mania (the defensive reaction to trauma). It is important to note, however, that de Duve deduces the nature of our unconscious investment in the photograph from an analysis of its semiotic structure i.e., he still relies on *semiotics* to explain our strong *affective* response to the photograph.

[30] Mary Ann Doane, *The Emergence of Cinematic Time: Modernity, Contingency, the Archive*, cit., p. 225.

[31] *Idem*, pp. 226-227.

[32] Barbara Probst, *Exposures*, Steidl, London 2008.

[33] Jonathan Crary, Uta Barth, Russell Ferguson, Holly Myers, *Uta Barth, The Long Now*, Gregory R. Miller & Co, New York 2010.

[34] Jonathan Crary, *The Singularity of the Every Day*, in Jonathan Crary, Uta Barth, Russell Ferguson, Holly Myers, *Uta Barth, The Long Now*, *Uta Barth, The Long Now*, cit., p. 349.

[35] *Idem*, p. 353.

[36] *Idem*, p. 351.

[37] Russell Ferguson, *Wider than the Sky*, in Jonathan Crary, Uta Barth, Russell Ferguson, Holly Myers, *Uta Barth, The Long Now*, *Uta Barth, The Long Now*, cit., p. 12.

[38] *Ibidem*.

[39] *Idem*, p. 19

[40] *Idem*, p. 21.

[41] See *Gestus*, in Jeff Wall, Peter Galassi, *Jeff Wall: Selected Essays and Interviews*, MOMA, New York 2007, pp. 85-87.

[42] Jeff Wall, "Wall Pieces: Jeff Wall interviewed by Patricia Bickers," in *Art Monthly 179* (September 1994), pp. 254-255.

[43] *Idem*, p. 299.

[44] *Idem*, p. 4.

[45] See Rosalind Krauss, *Voyage on the North Sea: Art in the Age of the Post-Medium Condition*, Thames and Hudson, London 1999.

Paolo Simoni, Home Movies - Archivio nazionale del film di famiglia,
Università di Modena e Reggio Emilia

Expanded Archive

Il progetto sperimentale *Expanded Archive* consiste principalmente nella creazione di artefatti mediali che permettano allo spettatore/utente di esplorare il linguaggio e la tecnica del cinema amatoriale in ambiti quali le aule universitarie, gli spazi museali, la rete.

Il progetto è promosso da Home Movies - Archivio Nazionale del Film di Famiglia (Bologna), insieme a Relab - Laboratorio di produzione audiovisiva (Università di Modena e Reggio Emilia), coinvolge un piccolo gruppo di ricercatori e archivisti, da me coordinato, e prevede la collaborazione di programmatori informatici, montatori ed esperti dei nuovi media. Aperto al contributo interdisciplinare di coloro che vorranno sviluppare le ipotesi da cui esso si muove, *Expanded Archive* ha preso corpo a partire dal 2010, sia sul piano teorico sia su quello pratico, che si sostanzia nella produzione e nella diffusione dei contenuti audiovisivi.[1]

L'obiettivo di *Expanded Archive* consiste nel proporre un modello per lo studio critico delle immagini amatoriali, che possa inoltre stimolare e promuovere lo sviluppo di iniziative di analisi e rielaborazione dei materiali filmici amatoriali conservati principalmente nell'Archivio Nazionale del Film di Famiglia.

Per considerare *Expanded Archive* un esperimento i cui risultati euristici siano motivati e attendibili, non si può prescindere da uno dei presupposti a sostegno di questa ricerca, probabilmente il motivo principale che l'ha indotta. L'Archivio, per il numero e le qualità dei fondi filmici conservati, possiede la consistenza e la capacità di rappresentare il fenomeno del cinema familiare italiano. Credo che questo punto non sia in discussione. Una veloce indagine nell'Archivio, ormai riconosciuto e notificato per il ruolo e la funzione che svolge, ne evidenzia la complessità: il numero dei fondi filmici familiari conservati (circa un migliaio) e il numero complessivo delle pellicole archiviate (oltre 15 mila), la varietà della provenienza territoriale di esse e la relativa periodizzazione (è ben rappresentato "il secolo brevissimo" del cinema amatoriale in pellicola, quell'arco temporale che si estende dagli anni Venti agli anni Ottanta del Novecento). Una tale ricchezza configura l'Archivio come "un mondo di immagini" dove è contenuta *in nuce* la storia della pratica del cinema amatoriale in Italia, dal momento che sono conservati fisicamente i documenti visuali che servono per tracciarla.

L'Archivio offre dunque un ampio ventaglio di possibilità, essenziale per rappresentare la produzione di immagini in movimento private nel secolo scorso e si colloca naturalmente come fulcro di un processo di scrittura di questa storia. E lo sguardo "innocente", *naïf*, cineamatoriale, lungi dal potere essere ridotto a sguardo inconsapevole, si è impresso su pellicola in un'enormità di immagini, non facilmente quantificabile e dai confini di interpretazione ancora incerti. Queste immagini, come si è più volte ripetuto, allargano lo spettro del visibile di una società e possono rivelare, come in uno specchio, aspetti dell'identità (non solo individuale ma anche collettiva) di chi le ha prodotte.

Expanded Archive nasce allora come *work in progress*, forse ambizioso e certamente ancora agli esordi, per decostruire, analizzare e ordinare in una tassonomia le pratiche del film amatoriale. In una prospettiva ampia e multidisciplinare, che prenda in considerazione da un lato le sue caratteristiche tecniche e dall'altro gli usi sociali e i meccanismi di auto-rappresentazione.

Per concepire e porre in essere un progetto come *Expanded Archive* è necessario indossare i panni di archeologi dello sguardo, e in queste vesti dotarsi di pazienza per individuare i singoli tasselli (le sequenze filmiche amatoriali nel caos in cui vengono ritrovate) e riordinarli, ricombinandoli in un mosaico che prenderà la forma di un catalogo.

Alla base di un approccio all'archivio connaturato al suo riuso troviamo il pensiero denso, foucaultiano, di Patricia Rodden Zimmermann su un "ideale" archivio filmico amatoriale (*home movie archive*) e sulle funzioni che oggi dovrebbe assumere mettendo in scena se stesso e così delineando scenari interessanti sul ruolo che può svolgere:

> *The home movie archive is always open and recombinant, active rather than static, evolving not fixed. It opens to the future. The home movie archive is a process and not a product. It is never finished and always revised. It is dialogic and transversal, creating new forms of understanding, explanation, relation.*
>
> *Once home movies are recovered and deposited in archives, a default position emerges that their acquisition is all that matters. The thing itself – the celluloid reels, metal cans, damaged white leader – become more and more fetished. The images become anchored in their specificity for what they represent, for what is inside the images and the frames. But the home movie artefact itself needs to be repositioned as open and active, not a dead repository of nostalgic images of the past shrouded in longing, desire, and quaintness. These artefacts are always in a dialogic relationship with specific social and political histories that relocate them out of nostalgia into a transversal structure that moves across social, political, aesthetic, and historical relations.*[2]

Nelle parole di Zimmermann sono sintetizzati con efficacia i motivi sotterranei che hanno spinto al concepimento di *Expanded Archive* e più in generale alle attività di archiviazione di questi anni. Invece, più concretamente, è dall'esperienza ormai decennale di censimento e recupero del cinema amatoriale italiano che sono da rintracciare i prodromi del progetto.

I film amatoriali devono sempre essere collocati precisamente in un contesto, il quadro storico di riferimento: da sottolineare come dato imprescindibile che la pratica del cinema amatoriale, lunga oltre sessant'anni nel corso del Novecento, segue i cambiamenti sociali ed è influenzata dai media coevi. A tale proposito, *Expanded Archive* diviene uno strumento di sistematizzazione cronologica dell'Archivio e di comparazione e mappatura delle diverse fasi tecnologiche, culturali e sociali.

Il lavoro archivistico in quanto tale (il recupero, la digitalizzazione e la catalogazione di *home movies*) ha indotto una riflessione sulla natura e sulla morfologia dell'Archivio, che è al medesimo tempo una struttura fisica e un luogo simbolico, in sintesi un'istituzione che raccoglie, conserva e diffonde memorie filmiche private. Ne consegue che *Expanded Archive* possa definirsi una germinazione dell'Archivio stesso e rappresenti in potenza la sua trasformazione in un dispositivo per l'accesso ai film.

Se vogliamo collocare il progetto in un ambito più ampio, occorre ribadire l'interesse crescente da parte degli archivisti, degli artisti, dei *filmmakers*, ma anche degli storici e degli antropologi, nei confronti di queste fonti audiovisive effimere. Pare inesauribile la tendenza a ritrovarle, riportarle alla luce dallo stato di invisibilità, quindi a nuova vita in creazioni che poi ritroviamo negli spazi della nostra epoca (i cinema, i musei, le gallerie d'arte, infine e soprattutto la rete). E in un siffatto contesto, che vede la contaminazione diffusa ed espansa delle forme filmiche in continua trasformazione e rinnovamento, si colloca *Expanded Archive*, che fin dal titolo rievoca e mutua l'idea del "cinema espanso", proprio laddove il progetto è volto alla realizzazione di eventi performativi e proiezioni in festival, convegni, seminari.

Con queste premesse e al di là delle potenzialità che vedremo, *Expanded Archive* ha prodotto risultati concreti, seppure finora solo in minima parte, ma ugualmente ha mostrato le direzioni da percorrere. Approfondire questa ricerca empirica sul linguaggio del cinema di famiglia, con il contributo degli studiosi, serve a circoscrivere e definire l'*home movie* in relazione all'atto di filmare. Per un verso gli sguardi e i gesti, inconsci e ricorrenti, di chi impugna la cinepresa, ma anche, al contrario, un insieme di tecniche consapevoli e codificate, atte a costruire una rappresentazione di se stessi e dell'istituzione familiare.

Lo sforzo di una decostruzione del linguaggio sul piano semantico e sintattico rimane l'intento più complesso da perseguire. Ogni pellicola deve essere "smontata" e sottoposta a un'accurata analisi. In questo senso vanno comparati tutti gli elementi che ne strutturano la forma e il contenuto e che ne definiscono le caratteristiche di artefatto culturale, i segni e i significati. Un discorso che diventa ancor più pregnante quando si prendono in considerazione anche le caratteristiche fisiche e materiche delle pellicola.

La serialità della produzione di immagini amatoriali è un dato essenziale per comprenderne la natura di fenomeno filmico e l'estetica, senza dimenticare, anzi sottolineando, le infinite variazioni che rendono ogni sguardo unico e irriducibile, al di là dell'intenzionalità. Allo stesso modo si osserva la trasformazione degli "sguardi", segnata dai mutamenti tecnici e da altri fattori culturali su cui qui non è possibile soffermarsi.

La proposta di una ricostruzione analitica fondata sulla definizione di elementi strutturali dell'*home movie*, dovrebbe iscriversi in un processo più ampio per una storia sociale del cinema amatoriale, ancora tutta da farsi. Per ora basterà offrire spunti che certamente potranno servire a un dibattito sul tema.

Expanded Archive è dichiaratamente debitore del lavoro di *filmmaker* sperimentali che hanno lavorato su materiali filmici d'archivio o addirittura sull'archivio come forma filmica. Da citare in particolate l'opera del cineasta austriaco Gustav Deutsch.

Il progetto deve molto alle pellicole di Deutsch, *filmmaker* senza macchina da presa, esploratore di archivi e maestro del riuso della materia filmica. Nella fattispecie la matrice è da rintracciare in un suo film di oltre venti anni fa, *Adria*.[3] Si tratta di una pellicola realizzata interamente con *home movies* raccolti da Deutsch stesso, film girati da turisti austriaci in vacanza sul mare Adriatico tra il 1954 e il 1968. Deutsch riorganizza il materiale in categorie, riassembla le singole riprese in successione e le presenta suddivise in capitoli e paragrafi, seguendo un metodo originale e pionieristico che il cineasta stesso racconta:

> *First, I look carefully at the home movies I had collected, without any structure in mind. Then I decided to categorize the films into "actions," meaning the activities of the filmmakers as they made the films; and "reactions," meaning the reactions of the people in front of the camera. Then I devised a more detailed formal organization that I followed very carefully. The decision to make such formal categories derived from my attempt to see the home movies not so much as the individual products of particular families, but as records of particular social group at a specific historical moment.*[4]

L'esperienza del film di Deutsch è molto preziosa perché ha tracciato un percorso da intendere come base di un metodo di lavoro per l'analisi dei film di famiglia, al di là degli scopi precipui che si era proposto. *Expanded*

Archive si muove dallo stesso metodo e parte dalle categorie che Deutsch ha individuato, nel tentativo di estenderne la portata e svilupparle, due decadi più tardi, in un altro contesto e, almeno in parte, con diverse finalità. Infatti, alcune delle categorie da lui prescelte sono state riprese tali e quali, altre sono state precisate e ulteriormente definite alla luce del materiale filmico preso in esame. Non è di poco conto anche l'affermazione dell'autore sulla scelta di analizzare il cinema amatoriale come prodotto di un gruppo sociale. *Expanded Archive* procede nella stessa direzione e da Deutsch eredita anche la vocazione a porsi come una possibile "scuola dello sguardo". Occorre però affermare che esistono altri aspetti fondamentali che caratterizzano un archivio di film di famiglia, aspetti che non vengono presi in considerazione con questo approccio: la raccolta delle memorie individuali e familiari, gli elementi biografici e le narrazioni delle storie connesse ai film.

L'approccio e poi il metodo seguito da Deutsch sono dunque fondamentali per la prospettiva che hanno aperto. Tuttavia in *Adria* essi sono applicati a un *corpus* molto ridotto di fondi filmici. Inoltre, Deutsch ha preferito limitarsi a una sola situazione tipica del film di famiglia, la vacanza al mare, con la scelta di un'unità di *location* (l'Adriatico) e di un arco temporale circoscritto (tra gli anni Cinquanta e Sessanta). Pur con queste premesse, il film catalogo di Deutsch offre una prima sistematizzazione del linguaggio e della tecnica del film di famiglia, di fatto rimasta necessariamente non conclusa, almeno dal nostro punto di vista di ricercatori e archivisti. Deutsch inaugura dunque con il film *Adria* un metodo analitico, che ritornerà in seguito nella sua opera con immagini cinematografiche di altra provenienza (ad es. il cinema scientifico e il cinema delle origini), e avvia allo stesso tempo una nuova prospettiva. Proseguire in quella direzione è facile nel momento in cui si ha davanti un archivio con migliaia di pellicole, inventariate e digitalizzate. Ed è proprio questa la situazione di partenza per l'elaborazione di *Expanded Archive*.

Veniamo alle realizzazioni di *Expanded Archive* come *output* di questo progetto *in progress*. Quanto è stato finora prodotto rappresenta una sorta di prototipo per gli sviluppi futuri: un *visual essay* di cui sono state realizzate due versioni, la prima monocanale, a schermo singolo, la seconda multischermo. Entrambe sono state presentate come istallazioni e proiettate in una sala con sonorizzazione dal vivo. Al momento, si è intervenuti su un *corpus* di circa 50 fondi filmici, corrispondenti a centinaia di film appartenenti a periodi diversi, dagli anni Venti agli anni Ottanta, nei quattro formati che caratterizzano la storia del cinema amatoriale: 9,5mm, 16mm, 8mm e Super8.[5]

Per quanto riguarda il metodo utilizzato nello scomporre e ricomporre l'archivio, i 50 fondi filmici in questione, si è proceduto alla definizione dei principi e delle fasi operative. Queste ultime corrispondono alle operazioni di seguito riportate.

La fase della scomposizione consiste nel decostruire ogni film digitalizzato in segmenti (*clips* video) che rappresentano unità minime linguistiche e che corrispondono a sequenze composte da *shots* singoli o multipli, la cui durata è estremamente variabile (si va dal piano sequenza di un'intera bobina a *shots* brevissimi di qualche fotogramma).

Ogni *clip* ottenuta viene raggruppata in insiemi e sottoinsiemi che corrispondono a categorie definite attraverso l'analisi del linguaggio cinematografico e della materia filmica (all'interno di un insieme le categorie possono essere ordinate in gerarchie, in una struttura da albero). Ecco i capitoli e i paragrafi, finora utilizzati nella classificazione, con la relativa numerazione, precisando che essi sono da considerarsi una suddivisione *in fieri*, che può essere ulteriormente dettagliata: 1 *Still shot* (inquadratura fissa): 1.1 *Views* (totali), 1.2 *Details* (dettagli), 1.3 *Happenings* (avvenimenti che si svolgono di fronte alla cinepresa, senza che siano provocati dalla sua presenza), 1.4 *Signs* (segni o simboli, questa subcategoria potrebbe essere ulteriormente dettagliata, in essa rientrano le scritte, le grafiche e i disegni come ad es. i cartelli stradali); 2 *Camera Movements* (movimenti di macchina): 2.1 *Looking for* (cercare con lo sguardo), 2.2 *Following Up* (seguire con l'occhio), 2.3 *From Left to Right* (panoramica da sinistra a destra), 2.4 *From Right to Left* (panoramica da destra a sinistra), 2.5 *Upwards*

(panoramica verso l'alto), 2.6 *Downwards* (panoramica verso il basso), 2.7 *Zooming* (carrello ottico avanti e indietro); 3 *From Transport* (le riprese effettuate da un mezzo di trasporto: automobile, treno, nave, aereo, funivia, seggiovia, ascensore, bicicletta, motocicletta, ecc.); 4 *Inter-actions* (le relazioni di sguardi e gestualità tra chi filma e chi è filmato e la messa in scena nel film di famiglia): 4.1 *Step Towards* (avanzamento verso la cinepresa del soggetto ripreso), 4.2 *Step Backwards* (allontanamento dalla cinepresa del soggetto), 4.3 *Looks and Portraits* (il ritratto filmato e lo sguardo in camera), 4.4 *Performances and Representations* (la messa in scena davanti alla cinepresa); 5 *Accidental Images* (immagini casuali): 5.1 *Shadows, Mirrors, Mistakes* (errori come l'ombra dell'operatore nell'inquadratura o la sua immagine specchiata o riflessa), 5.2 *Double Exposures* (doppie esposizioni, principalmente causate dall'errato caricamento della pellicola), 5.3 *Flashes and Flares* (gli effetti della luce impressa per sbaglio), 5.4 *Film Perforation* (le punzonature che indicano il lotto di produzione della pellicola); 6 *Titles* (i titoli). È superfluo aggiungere che un singolo segmento può appartenere a più categorie.
La terza fase riguarda l'edizione e la finalizzazione del video. L'edizione consiste nel combinare gli elementi racchiusi negli insiemi e nei sottoinsiemi nell'ordine prescelto. In questa fase s'inseriscono valutazioni che riguardano l'aspetto curatoriale di *Expanded Archive*. Nelle versioni attuali si è proceduto con l'*editing* non lineare consentito da un software di montaggio standard (*Final Cut*). Questa opzione presuppone in linea di massima la scelta da parte dei curatori della successione delle immagini su una *timeline*. L'evoluzione di *Expanded Archive* fa intravedere un passaggio ulteriore: la creazione di un *database cinema*, un sistema in cui il montaggio e tutto il processo che lo determina dovrà essere gestito da un *software* specifico, e la combinazione delle immagini potrà essere programmata secondo criteri di volta in volta stabiliti.

Notes

[1] Per un'introduzione al progetto, per il quale il termine più appropriato sarebbe "laboratorio aperto", dal momento che non è prevista una fine e si fonda su attività e iniziative *in itinere*, si veda anche Paolo Simoni, *Expanded Archive. Il cinema di famiglia: riflessioni sulle origini, le forme e l'uso contemporaneo dei film privati*, in AA.VV., *Fotografia europea. Incanto: lo sguardo sul mondo*, Electa, Milano 2010, pp. 148-153.

[2] Patricia Rodden Zimmermann, *Speculations on Home Movies: Thirty Axioms for Navigating Historiography and Psychic Vectors*, in Sonja Kmec, Viviane Thill (a cura di), *Private Eyes and the Public Gaze: The Manipulation and Valorisation of Amateur Images*, Kilomedia, Trier 2009, p. 20.

[3] *Adria - Urlaubsfilme 1954-68 (Film - Schule des Sehens I)*, 16mm, muto, Austria 1989, 37'.

[4] Scott MacDonald, *A conversation with Gustav Deutsch (part I)*, in Wilbirg Brainin-Donnenberg, Michael Loebenstein (a cura di), *Gustav Deutsch*, Filmmuseum Synema Publikationen, Wien 2009, pp. 69-70.

[5] *Expanded Archive*, II versione (video HD, 2010, 43') è visibile in rete all'indirizzo http://vimeo.com/28809268. Questa versione, presentata in diverse occasioni come *esibizione* dell'Archivio, è stata curata da Ilaria Ferretti, Claudio Giapponesi, Paolo Simoni e realizzata con la collaborazione di Diego Cavallotti, Karianne Fiorini, Mirco Santi e Lucia Tralli.

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Shooting Technologies in the History of Television Shows. The Memory of Rai

As claimed by some authors, in a process of common definition of the past, it is important "what to remember, what to forget and the reasons and methods of remembering," but also how it can be transformed "into an essential tool" for understanding and belonging.[1] Following what Todorov states about memory, a first subdivision is necessary between past rediscovery and its subsequent use; "there is no automatic link between these two points: the need to rediscover the past, to remember, does not yet tell us what will be the uses of the past."[2] Memory management is very important according to Le Goff: "Memory is pursued according to the present or only if it serves the present."[3]

Television has always been an important source of knowledge in the world, but the "material" audiovisual memory has not been well handled for many years. The theme of television archives and television memory in Italy was of marginal importance for an extended period. From the beginning there were no defined criteria and methods of storage. The Rai archive for a long period of time was simply a deposit of films, magnetic tapes and photos. Much material has been lost or damaged over the years. The concept that an audiovisual archive is a key issue for the economy of a broadcaster was a goal achieved recently.[4] Although an initiative was first launched in the mid-sixties, the real process only began in the mid-nineties[5] when Rai created a specific department for audiovisual: *Teche*. An organizational project, led by Barbara Scaramucci, was launched followed by a process of digitalization and transfer that led to our current state television technology being on the same level of other European countries on these issues. Thanks to the work of digitalization in the past fourteen years, Rai Teche now has about 1 million 300 hundred thousand photos and nearly eight hundred thousand hours of archived television shows.[6]

The aim of this paper is to outline the main traces of the shooting technologies evolution in the history of television. With the help of Claudio Speranza[7] at the end of 2010 an initial research was completed[8] followed by a second one in 2011-2012, in the photographic archives of the Teche Rai in order to identify the unpublished photos of the path of shooting technologies used in sixty years of production in television.

Numerous images of the television technique were found, but above all, many very interesting "behind the scenes" with director, cameramen, technicians especially in studio: production and in sport events. Photographs and frames were found that document, not only the actors on stage, but especially the cameras, machines, technology and production crews. For these reasons this paper would be a starting point for a study, of how the teams worked in TV production, and of the working practices of the protagonists.[9] To date ninety photos have been selected that will hopefully be on display at an exhibition in 2012. But let's start our journey through some of these photos, just a brief selection and explore how the world of shooting technologies was in Italy at the starting point of television history.

First of all, I would like to point out the obvious influences of American,[10] English and latterly German[11] technology on the shooting techniques used in Italian television. In late 1936, in a studio set up in Wyndmoor in the suburbs of Philadelphia, Philo Farnsworth created a fully operating TV studio with three cameras for a TV show called *Baby Dolores* with Nick Ross Orchestra (fig. 2).[12]

Attention was focused mainly on the technical realization of the experimental television, and the audience was limited to the Farnsworth's engineers and employees. They had fixed lenses mounted on the cameras, and the shooting techniques were highly simplified. The show was not important in the experimental step, the important thing was broadcasting with a good resolution and a fairly reliable signal.

The Berlin Olympics Game (fig. 3), in the summer of 1936, was a crucial point in fully understanding the potential of television and technology linked with some important events.[13] "With the release of Leni Riefenstahl's two part *Olympia* film, as well as experimentation with television at the Berlin games, the intrusion of the moving image into the Olympics began."[14] The Olympic Games were broadcast by Telefunken and Fernseh "using RCA and Farnsworth equipment respectively."[15] The television broadcast system was only for the Berlin area where around 160.000 Berliners could follow the Olympic races in public places equipped with new televisions.[16]

The 1936 Berlin Olympic Games remain the starting point for the close relationship between cinema, television and sports.[17] They were, in fact, the first major event of that period in which experimental televised technology played an important part, a strong link between reality shooting technologies and sport events, which in different phases changed both sports and the television production world.

In the history of television we have sports events such as the Olympic Games, Football World Cup, athletics, basketball, horse racing, baseball, tennis, formula one that we know very well where they take place, the start, duration and end. Here we can see one of the first horse racing events (fig. 4) broadcast in Rome (1954). The shooting was exciting and very close with a 24 inches telephoto lens. They become small events similar to Sunday games and at other times large media events according to Elihu Katz and Daniel Dayan definition:[18] these events are new opportunities for attraction in the daily schedule and become the main framework for capturing the TV audience.[19] In order to fully understand the importance of developing television technology it should be noted that even in 1947 60% of transmissions in the United States were sports events.[20] This trend deeply influenced the development of shooting techniques in Italy.

Looking back, it should be remembered that shooting television trials in Italy began around 1929 by two famous engineers as Alessandro Banfi and Sergio Bertolotti using the technology of Zworykin, Farnsworth and German industries. In 1939 the *Exhibition of Leonardo and of Italian Inventions* took place in Milan, in the EIAR studios the Safar and Magneti Marelli industries "used both cameras for broadcasting in order to compare the quality" (fig. 5).[21] In the same year Fernseh technologies from Germany provided the chain of shooting and transmitting for the studios in Via Asiago - Rome.

As we know, Italian television began transmitting programs officially in 1954. Some TV programs like *Lascia o raddoppia?* and *Campanile Sera*, on air since 1959, are the mirror of Italy in those years but, from a technical point of view, shooting technologies have only improved slightly compared to the experiments of few years earlier. They used turrets with four changeable lenses, from wide-angle lens (2 inches) to normal lens (3 inches), to mediotele lens (5 inches), to telephoto lens (8 inches). As we can see from the photo of *Arrivi e partenze* (1954), hosted by Mike Bongiorno, we found famous playwriters and television authors like Pietro Garinei and Sandro Giovannini (fig. 6). In the other one we find a famous TV show called *Casa Cugat* (1955) with Abbe Lane and Xavier Cugat (fig. 7), also in the next we have *Telematch* (fig. 8) hosted by Enzo Tortora (1956). Other great program formats came from abroad, but Enzo Tortora, the host, was very famous in the late seventies with the show *Portobello*. In this photo we have Marconi Mark 2 camera, one of the best in this period for quality and good handling. In the meanwhile the first videotaped network broadcast was made in America "by CBS tv with *Doug Edwards and the News* from Television City in Hollywood on 30 November 1956. Time shifting of television material had begun. The Ampex revolution was underway."[22]

Celebrations are very important moments for improving shooting technologies. March 25th, 1957 (fig. 9) proved a crucial day for Europe: the EEC common Market and Euratom treaty between France, Germany, Italy, Holland, Luxembourg and Belgium was signed in Rome on this day. During the external shooting a new TV zoom was used that used considerable "zoom in."

However, due to the weight, it was not possible to use it easily in broadcasting studios the same year. With the 1960 Olympic Games in Italy came a new interest, from one sport such as cycling, to others like football, which has strong narrative connotations and a strong ability to adapt to the rhythms of television programming.[23] Rai made a great production effort for this event with preparation starting in 1958. It produced 100 television sites, four television studios, employed 450 technicians and seventeen speakers (fig. 10). The results were amazing. At the end 106 hours of transmission was produced, about 96 in Eurovision. From this moment, going forward, the times of large sporting events tend to reflect the needs of television (fig. 11).[24]

On 23 July 1962, through the first Eurovision network, Rai participated in an experiment to link Europe with the United State using the satellite Telestar 1, which could offer only few minutes of worldwide connection. Here in this photo (fig. 12) we can see the beautiful landscape of ancient Rome through the television shooting at night broadcast with Telastar 1. Two years later during the 1964 Tokyo Olympic Games, which were still not broadcasted live, experiments were under way to broadcast live to the United States through the Satellite Syncom III.

In the 1964 picture we can see Vittorio Cottafavi (fig. 13), one of the most creative and eclectic directors in television, in action in the program *Ai poeti non si spara*. The picture shows Cottafavi, with cameraman Duilio Felici and assistant director Anna Maria Dondi, working with a hybrid camera: the Arriflex Elettronicam, a traditional 35mm film camera combined with a video recorder. This anticipated the use of video assist in film productions.

Rai began its color experiment in the mid sixties with great delay compared to other countries that already had color TV for at least ten years; the United States for example had color TV in 1951. Only on February 1st, 1977, Rai officially inaugurated the color TV. The photo (fig. 14) shows two RCA cameras in 1965, just arrived from the United States. Their dimension caused significant difficulties in starting the experiments.

The *Processo alla tappa* hosted by Sergio Zavoli, on air from May 1962 to 1968, was innovational in increasing the audiences of cycling shows, which was in decline since 1960. The multiple points of view are the strength of this program: the shooting from helicopter, motorcycles, camera car, handheld camera and so on were mixed to the one from fixed locations at the arrival of the race. The photo (fig. 15) shows a scene from the *51st Giro d'Italia* in 1968, the final year of the program. Sergio Zavoli was able to interview Italo Zilioli during the race thanks to the camera car created by Rai lab technicians. The strong point for the *Processo alla tappa* was the ability to capture the emotions of the cyclist with the camera and microphone, which spectators greatly appreciated.[25]

Meanwhile, portable cameras were introduced in the mid-sixties.[26] We can observe one of the first models that arrived in Rai, a Philips Miniature Vidicon tubes shown in this picture (fig. 16).

This camera, very handy, was used in shooting a football game at the Stadio Flaminio in Rome. Photo 16 shows the famous studio broadcast of the moon landing in July 1969 (fig. 17). Portable Japanese Ikegami cameras were widely used. Enzo Trapani (fig. 18) an innovative TV director much appreciated by younger audiences for his non conformist views also used this technology in transmissions such as *Alta pressione* (1962) and *Senza rete* (1968), another famous TV show with an audience of 18 million. Theater directors such as Giorgio Strehler worked on experiments too, with portable cameras in television shooting (fig. 19): in this picture we see the innovative handheld camera Ampex BC300 with portable recorder VR-3000.

If we talk about television shows, we should remember *Teatro 10*, one of the most popular programs by Antonello Falqui, a famous Italian television director, who, from the fifties to the late eighties, made a significant mark in the history of television variety show through innovative shooting techniques and camera movement, and especially with shots made with wide-angle effect and very low lying cameras, as the photo *Teatro 10* shows during the second edition[27] in 1971 with the famous actor Alberto Lupo as host. In this episode we see Antonello Falqui directing the cameraman shooting the singer Jose Feliciano from a low point of view (fig. 20).

The eighties brought great changes in Italian television formats such as *Portobello*[28] hosted by Enzo Tortora (fig. 21). This program put daily life on TV, and for this reason *Portobello* became the so called "mother of all TV free programs,"[29] a very simple television machine, a spectacular trap where the ridiculous inventions of the characters created audience both in the countryside and in the cities. Small articles from local newspapers were shown and highlighted on Friday night television.[30] In terms of shooting the eighties marked the predominance of the German cameras as in early years: the Bosch Fernseh KCU 40, with camera tubes Plumbicon, shown here in its version of 1975, which had already made their debut at the Olympic Games in Monaco, in 1972, enabling any kind of shooting, especially in water sports. The same camera has been used more than ten years later in Rai studios, for example in 1988-1989 at Teatro delle Vittorie in Rome, during the shooting of the Saturday night show *Europa Europa* (fig. 22). In the picture we find the well-known Italian television writer-director Michele Guardì that worked in his earlier years with the great TV director Antonello Falqui.

I would like to close my paper with a photo of a moving sports image filmed using a steady-cam[31] (fig. 23), as a partial conclusion on the importance of the TV events in the role of collective memories. The steady-cam symbolizes the continuous movement of the camera,[32] the desire to follow events even closer thanks to satellite transmission and worldwide broadcasting of event such as the Olympic Games and World Cup, which allows people from all over the world to connect either through television or the web. During these events experiments are always carried out with the hope of improving technology. After the introduction of color TV in the seventies it is now the time for high definition TV. Watching a game of football in high definition is not only a reality in homes or on the playing fields: it is something more, a completely new experience, on large screen with a visual quality unimaginable to the human eye. Details are highlighted; the multiple actors in a scene are portrayed very well like in a cinema format. We have before us a new sensorial experience. The last Olympic Games in Vancouver (2010) were triumphant in bringing high definition TV on multiple channels. The story of sport has encouraged the diffusion of themed channels and digital terrestrial TV; it has brought the spectator new forms of choice, shooting technology and more frenetic narrative rhythms. At this point it is impossible to forget any competitive or celebrative event such as athletics. However, it would be impossible to remember them all, and therefore it is necessary to make a selection. I would like to conclude with a consideration by Todorov about the concept of memory: "we must first of all keep in mind the fact that memory is in no way the opposite of forgetting. The two terms that contrast with each other are *disappearance* (forgetting) and *preservation*. Memory is always and necessarily an interaction of these two."[33] We mustn't "forget" the technological memory of the television and it must be conserved for future generations.

Illustrations

2. Philo Farnsworth - TV studio (Usa, 1936) (Special Collections, University of Utah Library, in David E. Fischer, Marshall Jon Fisher, *Tube. The Invention of Television*, Harvest Hartcourt Brace, New York 1996, pp. 236-237).
3. Olympic Games (Berlin, 1936) (Anthony Smith, *Television. An International History*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1995, p. 149).
4. Horse Racing (Rome, 1954) (Teche Rai).
5. Safar/Marelli technologies (Milan, 1939) (Diego Verdegiglio, *La tv di Mussolini. Sperimentazioni televisive nel Ventennio Fascista*, Cooper & Castelvecchi, Roma 2003, p. 273).
6. *Arrivi e partenze* (Rome, 1954), by Pietro Garinei and Sandro Giovannini (Teche Rai).
7. *Questa sera a casa Gugat* (Rome, 1955), with Abbe Lane and Xavier Gugat (Teche Rai).
8. *Telematch*, hosted by Enzo Tortora (Milan, 1956) (Teche Rai).
9. *Eurovision* (Rome, 1957) (Teche Rai).
10. Olimpic Games Studio (Rome, 1960), EMI Shooting Technologies (Teche Rai).
11. Olimpic Games, Stadio Olimpico EMI Shooting Technologies (Rome, 1960) (Teche Rai).
12. *Eurovision* - Telstar I (Rome, 1962) (Teche Rai).
13. Director Vittorio Cottafavi (Rome, 1964) (Teche Rai).
14. RCA color camera (Rome, 1965) (Teche Rai).
15. *Processo alla tappa* (1968), hosted by Sergio Zavoli (Agenzia Olympia - C. Speranza private archive).
16. Philips Vidicon camera technologies Rome - Stadio Flaminio (Rome, 1968) (C. Speranza private archive).
17. Moon landing - TV studio (Rome, 1969) (Teche Rai).
18. Director Enzo Trapani with cameraman Pietro Morbidelli using Ikegami portable camera (Rome, 1967) (Teche Rai).
19. Giorgio Strehler using Ampex BC300 portable camera (Milan, 1968) (Teche Rai).
20. Director Antonello Falqui in TV show *Teatro 10* (Rome, 1971) (Teche Rai).
21. *Portobello*, TV show hosted by Enzo Tortora (Milan, 1982) (Teche Rai).
22. TV show *Europa Europa*, Director Michele Guardì talking with cameraman (Rome, 1988-1989) (A. Catolfi private archive).
23. Steadicam shooting (Rome, 2000) (Teche Rai).

Notes

[1] Carmen Leccardi, *Sociologie del tempo*, Laterza, Roma-Bari 2009, pp. 59-60.

[2] "Nessun automatismo lega questi due punti: l'esigenza di riscoprire il passato, di ricordarsi, non ci

dice ancora quale sarà il suo uso che se ne farà," in Tzvetan Todorov, *Gli abusi della memoria* [*Les abus de la mémoire*, Les editions Arlea, Paris 1995], Ipermedia, Napoli 2001, p. 34.

[3] Tzvetan Todorov, *Gli abusi della memoria*, cit., p. 39.

[4] Angelo Sferrazza, "Le Teche Rai," in Luisa Cigognetti, Lorenza Servetti, Pierre Sorlin (eds.), *Archivi televisivi e storia contemporanea. Quattro esperienze a confronto*, Istituto Regionale Ferruccio Parri/Marsilio, Venezia 1999, pp. 59-66.

[5] In the year 1996.

[6] Barbara Scaramucci, Guido Del Pino, *Come si documenta la tv*, Rai Eri, Roma 2006. See also http://www.teche.rai.it/noiteche/.

[7] A Rai TG1 journalist for forty years.

[8] I would like to thank Barbara Scaramucci (Teche Rai Director), Stefano Nespolesi (Teche Rai Library in Rome), Chiara Antonelli (Teche Rai), Jennifer Gillen for their great help.

[9] Peppino Ortoleva, Maria Teresa Di Marco, *Luci del teleschermo. Televisione e cultura in Italia*, Electa, Milano 2004; Alberto Barbera (ed.), *Cavalcarono insieme. 50 anni di cinema e televisione in Italia*, Electa, Milano 2004; Claudio Ferretti, Barbara Scaramucci, *RicordeRai. 1924/1954/2004*, Eri, Roma 2004; Massimo Temporelli, *Tecnologie della ricezione. Per una storia tecnologica della tv*, in Gianni Canova (ed.), *Dreams: i sogni degli italiani in 50 anni di pubblicità televisiva*, Mondadori, Milano 2004, pp. 99-113.

[10] RCA, Westinghouse e Philco. The two main inventors of the time, Farnsworth and Zworykin, worked for these three companies. Philo Farnsworth in 1928 had built a cathode-ray system that could transmit from a motion picture projector. Later Philo Farnsworth worked with Philco. On the other side Vladimir Zworykin, a Russian emigrant, first began to work on iconoscope on 1923 at Westinghouse laboratories and then in 1929 at RCA with the patron David Sarnoff. In Europe John Logie Bard, a scotsman, between 1923 and 1925 developed a working television system. Baird gave experimental broadcasts in Berlin in 1929, was a founding member of German Fernseh company, and in 1931 visited Manfred Von Ardenne in his Lichterfeld laboratory. See David E. Fisher, Marshall J. Fisher, *Tube. The Invention of Television*, Harvest Hartcourt Brace, New York 1996, pp. 235-237, 362.

[11] "Nazi Germany forced the time announcing on 22 March 1935 the 'first regular television program in the world' with a rather primitive tv standard: 180 lines and 25 frames per second, they would precede the British, with four and half hours of broadcasting a week, which became fourteen in the next years," in Enrico Menduni, *Televisioni. Dallo spettacolo alle piattaforme multimediali*, Il Mulino, Bologna 2009, pp. 28-29; by a technical point of view this it was not a success: the picture quality "was quite poor," see Albert Abramson, *The Invention of Television*, in Anthony Smith (ed.), *Television. An International History*, Oxford University Press, New York 1995, p. 29.

[12] David E. Fisher, Marshall J. Fisher, *Tube. The invention of television*, cit., pp. 235-237, 362; Erik Barnouw, *Tube of Plenty. The Evolution of American Television*, Oxford University Press, New York-Oxford 1990, pp. 77-87.

[13] *Idem*, pp. 236-239.

[14] Michael R. Real, *Mediasport, Technology and the Commodification of Postmodern Sport*, in Lawrence Wenner (ed.), *Mediasport*, Routledge, London-New York 1998, p. 19.

[15] David E. Fisher, M.J. Fisher, *Tube. The Invention of Television*, cit., p. 362.

[16] Michel Kloft, *La televisione del Terzo Reich*, in Diego Verdegiglio, *La tv di Mussolini. Sperimentazioni televisive nel Ventennio Fascista*, Cooper & Castelvecchi, Roma 2003, pp. 9; 101-106.

[17] Cooper C. Graham, *Leni Riefenstahl and Olympia*, Metuchen, New York, Scarecrow Press 1986;

Id., "'Olympia' in America, 1938: Leni Riefenstahl, Hollywood and Kristallnacht," in *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, vol. 13, no. 4, 1993, pp. 433-450.

[18] Daniel Dayan, Elihu Katz, *Le grandi cerimonie dei media*, Baskerville, Bologna 1993.

[19] Antonio Catolfi, *Televisione e sport dalla pellicola al digitale*, in Elio Matarazzo, *La Rai che non vedrai*, Franco Angeli, Milano 2007, pp. 174-184.

[20] Aldo Grasso, *Prima lezione di televisione*, Laterza, Roma-Bari 2011, p. 17.

[21] Diego Verdegiglio, *La tv di Mussolini. Sperimentazioni televisive nel Ventennio Fascista*, cit., p. 273 (Vittorio Banfi, son of Alessandro Banfi interview).

[22] Albert Abramson, *The Invention of Television*, cit. p. 33.

[23] Barbara Scaramucci, Claudio Ferretti, *Roma 1960: le Olimpiadi della tv*, Rai Eri, Roma 2010.

[24] Michael R. Real, *Mediasport*, cit., pp. 14-26.

[25] Sergio Zavoli, *Sognando di volare*, in Antonio Catolfi, Giorgio Nonni (eds.), *Comunicazione e sport*, Quattroventi, Urbino 2006, pp. 9-30.

[26] In April 1966, the Westel Company of San Matteo, California, introduced the Westel WRC-150, the first self contained one inch portable television camera with a video recorderer. In April 1967 the Ampex Corporation introduced the first battery operated portable color video recorder VR-3000", in Albert Abramson, *The Invention of Television*, cit., p. 34.

[27] The first was in 1965.

[28] *Portobello*, 1977-1983 for six editions, and the last one from February to June 1987.

[29] Aldo Grasso, *Storia della televisione italiana*, Garzanti, Milano 1992, pp. 345-347; Id., *Prima lezione sulla televisione*, cit., p. 27.

[30] Franco Monteleone, *Storia della radio e della televisione in Italia. Società, politica, strategie, programmi 1922-1992*, Marsilio, Venezia 1992, p. 418.

[31] The steadicam is a shooting film technology invented by Garrett Brown in the early seventies. Steadicam "has revolutionized the way films are shot." In Garrett Brown, "The Steadicam and 'The Shining,'" in *American Cinematographer*, vol. 61, no. 8, August 1980, pp. 786-854.

[32] Roberto Peruzzi, *Lo steadicam e il suo uso espressivo nel cinema contemporaneo*, Digitalprint, Rimini 2003.

[33] Tzvetan Todorov, *The Uses and Abuses of Memory*, in Howard Macchitello (ed.), *What Happens to History: the Renewal of Ethics in Contemporary Thought*, Routledge, London 2001, p. 12.

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The Gump/Nerd Memory Problem: Cinema, New Media and *Mal d'Archive*

Introduction

Jacques Derrida's analysis of new technologies and the information age as a real "archival earthquake" increasingly appears as an accurate description for our everyday life.[1] In recent years, the archive has been questioned as never before,[2] becoming not only a critical subject in several academic disciplines, but playing also a crucial role in the new field of knowledge labeled as "digital humanities." Digitization is dramatically changing the way we create, use, evaluate and define archives. In the age of Google, confronted with an excess of unidentified information units, the problems of data storage, retrieval and selection is becoming more and more strategic.
Following Maurizio Ferraris's philosophical reasoning, we can say that when everything can be immediately turned into a document we need to find a new philosophy capable of revealing the *archi-structural* subtext of human life. According to Ferraris, digital technologies simply make explicit what is a key feature of any social reality, that is its foundation in tracing, in the very *archi-structural* possibility of leaving traces/inscriptions. According to Ferraris, the contemporary world is under the power of registration, not communication. This would at least partially explain why today the control over energy resources is less important than the control over collective memory, why the great post-war philosophical project grounded on notions such as "dialogue" and "transparent communication" (from Popper to Habermas) could not be fulfilled and why, on the contrary, we are witnessing the triumph of control and tracing.[3]
My goal here is to tackle the larger issue of the archive from a particular perspective tied to a specific and less ambitious question: how do the increasingly pervasive archival practices influence media culture? How do they modify it and how are they modified by it? Does an "archival imagination" exist in media culture?
Therefore, I will explore here the problem of the archival imagination in new media. I will do it in two steps: first of all, I will dwell upon a film dating back to the mid-Nineties, then I will move to two contemporary American tv-series.

Archival Imagination, Digitization and Forrest's Memory

It would be impossible here to review the relationship between archival practices, memory and twentieth-century media (especially cinema). It is a complex history, which turned to a privileged terrain, for example, to define its terms in the triangular relationship connecting archive, history and Shoah. Everyone will agree, however, that a film like *Forrest Gump* (Robert Zemeckis, 1994) can be considered a first, little earthquake in the relationship between the visual archive and social memory.

It is known that the main idea of Henry Roth's adaptation of Winston Groom's novel is the transformation of the protagonist in the unintentional cause of a series of important events in American post-war public life. Thanks to the manipulation of archival materials we can see Gump with Presidents and Governors, and find out that he accidentally contributed to the birth of pop culture icons such as Elvis Presley's dancing style and the lyrics of John Lennon's *Imagine*.

Gump is an *idiot*: in semiotic terms, an individual perfectly active on the pragmatic level (he's a successful man) but deficient on the cognitive level. We usually associate idiocy to a weak subject, but Gump is not. His idiocy does not prevent him from being fully a strong subject. He's actually *the* subject of post 1945 North-American history. On the one hand, Forrest is not able to understand the connection between the small circle (his biography) and the large circle (national history); on the other hand, he does not only "make" American history but he also becomes its narrator thanks to nineteen consecutive and subjective flashbacks. As a consequence, *Forrest Gump* forces us to face the problem of the use and interpretation of history and memory, as well as of the archival materials that are necessary to both of them.

American scholars show diverging opinions on the subject. Most of them are critical. Thomas Byers, for example, asserts that the use of manipulated archival materials for the historical sequences constitutes an attempt to erase some essential features of American history, therefore representing a conciliatory rewriting of national identity.[4] According to Jennifer Hyland Wang, the film demonstrates how fictional characters can absorb and help the emerging of cultural politics in a media-saturated environment. *Forrest Gump* (both the character and the film) can be regarded as a sort of "discursive relay station"[5] capable of altering the Sixties and Seventies political memory according to the specific goals of the conservative agenda.

Is this enough to make Gump a post-historical creature and the film a nostalgic narrative aiming at transposing the Fifties in the Reagan years? Those who see *Forrest Gump* as an illicit appropriation of the American history are usually the same people who complain about the commercialization of nostalgia and the reduction of the past to a mass of inert, superficial and spectacular images, the cause of deplorable effects such as *The History Channel* and *Pocahontas*.

On the contrary, other critics regard the same phenomena (or similar ones such as Holocaust museums, D-Day celebrations, *JFK*, *Schlinder's List*) in a positive light, as the sign of a historical awareness which is now becoming more widespread in the public sphere. According to Vivian Sobchack, for example, ever since popular audiences have become involved in the new narratives of History, it is possible to talk about a more active and reflective historical subject.[6]

Archival Imagination in the Age of Google

Whether we consider *Forrest Gump* as an example of the postmodern and post-historical poetics of nostalgia or, conversely, as an invitation to a new way of archiving, representing and interpreting History, we must admit that Zemeckis' film still expresses an archival imagination that is by this time somehow dated. At the core of

Forrest Gump's archive falsification we find the problem of historical authenticity, of the falsifiability of images and visual materials composing the archive. Today, on the contrary, our main fears and worries revolve around the way in which archives connect to our everyday life and the problem of the data use and findability. The question of the relationship between archival knowledge and memory is becoming secondary, or, to put it better, it begins to appear as a function of the problems of information retrieval and delivery technology.

My suggestion is to define the two poles of contemporary archival imagination as "archive euphoria" and "archive fever." Let us start with the first point.

Think about how things are changing in the representation of electronic surveillance. From *The Conversation* (Francis Ford Coppola, 1974) to *Enemy of the State* (Tony Scott, 1998), technological thrillers expressed the same worries underlying critical discourses in sociology and political philosophy (for example in David Lyon's works on new digital technologies and surveillance politics).[7] While empirical research is still divided between on the one hand scholars who support the hypothesis that new generations of social network users don't pay attention to privacy problems and to the traceability of their lives and, on the other, scholars who deny such a theory,[8] the documentary film *We Live in Public* (Ondi Timoner, 2009) shows the *jouissance* of giving up all privacy, proving that this choice is now regarded as more and more glamorous, "arty," self-expressive. The idea of *participatory surveillance* has become widespread in the research fields on narrative ecosystems and the use of social networks.[9] This new approach is linked with an invitation to go beyond the panopticon model grounding the hierarchical, vertical concept of surveillance. In fact, "in the context of online social networking, surveillance is something potentially empowering, subjectivity-building and even playful."[10]

24 is certainly the TV series in which the connection between narrative pleasure, the expansion of the scopic drive, the use of new technologies and the exploitation of digital archives is more explicit.

Jack Bauer (Kiefer Sutherland), the main character, is all but an idiot. He always thinks, acts and reacts successfully, processing data in record time. His action (and his thinking), however, is dependent on digital prostheses. Bauer cannot move into action without the guidance of Chloe O'Brian (Mary Lynn Rajskub), the real co-protagonist of the series. Chloe is a computer technician who has access to any satellite image, surveillance camera, restricted-access database, city and building plans. She informs Bauer in real time through mobile phones or downloading sensible information directly into the technological devices Jack is equipped with. Chloe has the keys of a sort of digital meta-archive and she uses them to Bauer's benefit.

As Derrida wrote in *Archive Fever*, "there is no political power without control of the archive, if not of memory. Effective democratization can always be measured by this essential criterion: the participation and the access to the archive, its constitution, and its interpretation."[11] In *24* surveillance is still vertical, *panoptical*, tied to a restricted access to the gaze. In fact, *24* describes American democracy as perpetually at risk and ready to temporarily sacrifice itself in order to survive. Power is revealed in its real nature of absolute decision and asymmetrical distribution of archival knowledge. Time in *24* is the time of the state of exception, of the suspension of the rule, of the decision necessarily violating the validation process proper to democratic procedures as a consequence of its excessive rapidity and decision-making tendency. The effects of this configuration of time, however, are made possible by the effects of the archive. In fact, the rhythm of the series is determined by the way in which the technological-archival devices release information. The archive here functions as a sort of cross-medial connector guiding the actions of the characters. It literally sets the rhythm of the action, it alters the codes of the action movie, it is what permits narrative passages to be cut or accelerated allowing the characters to obtain the most effective result in the shortest period of time.

The Body as an Archival Support: Chuck's Memory

Throughout the eight seasons of *24*, the criterion of an ongoing technological updating is respected as far as it concerns the presentation of computer systems for data retrieval, espionage and surveillance. Nevertheless, digital control is still threatened by recurring menace: the blackout (which in fact occurs every time that the terrorist attacks directly the Counter Terrorist Unit - CTU, provoking a collapse of its digital heart). The perpetual threat of being unable to access the database, the possibility of lacking this resource necessary for orientation and intervention in the world, allows us to move our attention to the opposite site of the archival imagination: archive fears, the "feverish" archive. For time reasons, I will refer to a single example: *Chuck*.

In this TV series, Chuck Bartowski (Zachary Levi), is a nerd working as a computer expert in Burbank, California. A nerd, again in semiotic terms, is the opposite of an idiot: he's a subject deficient on the pragmatic axis and hyperactive on the cognitive axis. Not really the typical hero of an action story. At a certain point, however, a catastrophe occurs in Chuck's small-nerd-world. One of his former Stanford classmates, now a CIA agent, sends him an email. When Chuck opens it, the whole database of the CIA neural supercomputer called the Intersect is erased from its original site and downloaded in Chuck's brain. Nothing less. As a consequence Chuck unintentionally becomes the keeper of the secrets of a world superpower. Sarah Walker, a beautiful CIA agent, is assigned the task of overseeing his non-stop surveillance. Chuck will be thus involved not only in national security affairs, but also in a love story with Sarah: two tasks that don't match with his nerd skills.

From a purely descriptive point of view, we may see Chucks' transformation into a living archive of the American secrets as the starting point of an action comedy that is nothing more than a new chapter of the grand narrative that could be titled "The Revenge of the Nerds," which started with the Internet economy and has continued today with films like *The Social Network* (David Fincher, 2010). It is evident, however, that we are interested in *Chuck* for other reasons.

The turning point that triggers the plot is the downloading of the secret data in Chuck's mind. In this sequence we have a literal representation of a question that Derrida asks himself in relation to psychoanalysis: "what becomes then of the archive when it is embodied directly in one's own body?"[12] What happens when the archival support coincides with the subject's body? The spontaneous answer is: we have a perfect image of the "archive fever." Digital archives are fast, huge, overflowing, and therefore also uncertain, out of control, sometimes fortuitous.[13] Every archive, Derrida insists, is guided also by the death drive, by the goal of removing any trace. It is not by chance that in Italian "to archive" a judicial act means to make it disappear in the maze of the archive where it will be preserved/lost forever. Flesh is an unstable support and the consequences of concentrating on a single anti-heroic body *toute la mémoire du monde*, all the nation secrets, may be horrible.

In *Chuck*, at the beginning of the series, the problem is that we have to deal with a subject-archive who doesn't want to be in that situation, a body refusing to serve as a database. The twentieth century has also been the century in which, in certain moments, documenting, archiving and testifying became more important than living or staying alive. Here we are in the opposite situation: in order to go back to his life Chuck desires to uninstall the archive-function that has decided to live in him against his will. Possessing the archive means being in danger, because all the knowledge stored in his brain is not only the evidence of his "archive fever" but is also an archive of dreadful events, a library of secret information, an anthology of the misdeeds of world's history.

However, Chuck almost immediately gives up the idea of getting rid of the Intersect – otherwise the series wouldn't have any future – and learns how to live with an artificial and unwelcome memory. This is Chuck's particular condition: he solves and exemplifies the "archive fever" at the same time.

On the one hand, the character embodies the ideal espionage-archival imagination: to collect all the information and the images about the world in a single synthesis operator, a human subject who can move on the territory as it happens with mobile technologies, a sort of geo-localized smart phone, able to deliver essential information where they are needed.

On the other hand, Chuck does not have unconditional access to the archive, because he cannot retrieve the data stored in Intersect at his own will. For this reason Chuck is drawn into very dangerous missions by the other secret agents: only through a direct contact with the territory, by seeing faces and "live" situations, is Chuck able to locate the files stored in his mind. The connection and the data retrieval take place only under certain conditions. The archive works as a media environment one needs to be connected with. And the connection procedure is peculiar: it is necessary to connect the bodily support to a narrative situation (the adventure in which Chuck is involved) and to a physical place[14] (the territory where the action takes place). In other terms, as the scholars of digital ecosystems would say, a geo-localized bridge-experience has to be established. The link between the archival space and physical places is a problem related to the connection and design of the media-archival experience.[15] This experience is always uncertain, uncontrolled, intermittent.

Le Mal d'archive ou pire…

What do we find beyond the limits defined by the two poles here identified as "archive euphoria" and "archive fever?" We are confronted with two questions: what happens when the registration-documentation of our lives becomes perpetual, when there is always an archive-eye working somewhere, but the subject is lost? One may look for an answer in Michael Haneke's *Caché* (2004).

Vice versa: what happens when only the human subject survives but there is no archive anymore, that is to say, there is no trace of the past, of human history? One may look for an answer in John Hillcoat's *The Road* (2009). The scenarios opened up in this film are much more dystopian and disturbing than the problem presented by a series like *Chuck*, which is otherwise very symptomatic of the "archive fever." A lacanian would say: *le mal d'archive ou pire*: better *archive fever* than no archive at all.

Between "archive fever" and "archive euphoria," the contemporary archive crisis and the way in which this crisis is present in contemporary media culture show us that the memory, the recording and the archiving of the past (an archiving process that, to draw on Derrida once again, is structurally open to the future), are increasingly crucial in our agenda. The archive is not vanishing. The problem is "to archive otherwise." In other words: the *archive drive* is here to stay.

Notes

[1] Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago-London 1995.

[2] Till Geiger, Niamh Moore, Mike Savage, "The Archive in Question," CRESC, University of Manchester, working paper, April 2010: http://www.cresc.ac.uk/publications/the-archive-in-question, last access 23 January 2012.

[3] See Maurizio Ferraris, *Documentalità. Perché è necessario lasciare tracce*, Laterza, Roma-Bari 2009.

[4] Thomas Byers, "History Re-Membered: *Forrest Gump*, Postfeminist Masculinity, and the Burial of the Counterculture," in *Modern Fiction Studies*, vol. 42, n. 2, 1996, p. 436. See also: Judith P. Zinsser,

"Real History, Real Education, Real Merit - Or Why Is *Forrest Gump* So Popular?," in *Journal of Social History*, vol. 29, n. 1, 1995; Jonathan Rosenbaum, "Stupidity As Redemption," in *Movies As Politics*, University of California Press, Berkeley 1997; Joseba Gabilondo, *Morphing Saint Sebastian: Masochism and Masculinity in Forrest Gump*, in Vivian Sobchack (ed.), *Meta-Morphing: Visual Transformation and the Culture of Quick-Change*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis 1999; for a symptomatic reading in a positive light: Peter N. Chumo II, "'You've Got to Put the Past Behind You before You Can Move on': *Forrest Gump* and National Reconciliation," in *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, n. 23, Spring 1995.

[5] Jennifer Hyland Wang, "A Struggle of Contending Stories: Race, Gender, and Political Memory in *Forrest Gump*," in *Cinema Journal*, vol. 39, n. 3, Spring 2000, p. 93.

[6] Cfr. Vivian Sobchack, "History Happens," in Id. (ed.), *The Persistence of History. Cinema, Television and the Modern Event*, Routledge, New York 1996.

[7] David Lyon, *Surveillance After September 11*, Polity Press, Cambridge 2003; Id. (ed.), *Theorizing Surveillance: the Panopticon and Beyond*, Willan Publishing, Cullompton-Devon 2006.

[8] See Danah Boyd, Eszeter Hargittai, "Facebook privacy settings: Who cares?," in *First Monday*, vol. 15, n. 8-2, August 2010, http://firstmonday.org/htbin/cgiwrap/bin/ojs/index.php/fm/article/viewArticle/3086/2589, last access 23 January 2012.

[9] Kai Pata, *Participatory Design Experiment: Storytelling Swarm in Hybrid Narrative Ecosystem*, available at the following address: http://tihane.files.wordpress.com/2009/11/pata_designexperiment_book.pdf, last access 23 January 2012.

[10] Anders Albrechtsllund, "Online Social Networking as Participatory Surveillance," in *First Monday*, vol. 13, n. 3, March 2008, http://firstmonday.org/htbin/cgiwrap/bin/ojs/index.php/fm/article/viewArticle/2142/19, last access 23 January 2012.

[11] Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, cit., p. 5.

[12] Jacques Derrida, *Mal d'archivio. Un'impressione freudiana*, Filema, Napoli 2005.

[13] See Maurizio Ferraris, *Sans papier. Ontologia dell'attualità*, Castelvecchi, Roma 2007.

[14] Google archives, finds, selects, aggregates as well, and it makes it on the basis of the variable established by the queries of its users (see Paolo Bottazzini, *Googlecrazia. Il mondo in una query*, Convergenze, Milano 2010). In the same way in which Google releases data as a response to a question, in Chuck's mind secret information depends on an external stimulus of his eyes in a given condition which somehow "sends a query" to the Intersect. The database installed in Chuck's mind does not look like the catalogue of a library or an encyclopedia. It is rather a liquid archive which opens up and reconfigures itself every time in relation to the query implicit in the contingent action.

[15] On the design of media experience see Ruggero Eugeni, *Semiotica dei media. Le forme dell'esperienza*, Carocci, Roma 2010.

Beyond the Screen: Archive, Art and Urban Spaces

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Iterating Archival Footage and the Memory of War

In this article I focus on the archive as a specific site of memory, in particular the audiovisual archive. I investigate the use of audiovisual archival records as sources for remembering war, specifically the war in the former Yugoslavia (1991-1995). I do so by discussing one particular case study, the two-channel video installation *Raw Footage* (2006) by the Dutch artist Aernout Mik. In this work, Mik presents a selection of unused, unedited news footage from the archives of press agencies Reuters and ITN – literally "raw footage." Mik selected, compiled and staged this material in an installation that present us with a different perspective on that conflict, a view on the war in the former Yugoslavia that we literally have not seen before. My discussion of this example aims to show that the reuse of audiovisual archival material in artistic work can be a means to move the public memory of war in new and unexpected directions. By extension, I argue that keeping track of such iterations of archival footage is crucial for a proper understanding of the different ways in which we remember the past.[1]

Performing the Archive

Mik's exploration and use of the archival material of Reuters and ITN is part of a wider interest by artists in the archive, both in its concrete manifestation as a collection of audiovisual documents of the past and in its ontological dimension, indicating social and cultural processes of remembering and forgetting. Many contemporary artists have explored collections of audiovisual heritage and reused the footage in compilation films and in film and video installations.[2] The iteration of archival footage from the archive to the artwork entails a shift in meaning: in their new, manipulated context – exposing hidden or previously unnoticed aspects of the footage – the images can reshape our memory of the past documented in those images. As visual artist Fiona Tan puts it: "The recycling of film fragments or photos breathes new life into the images; they are liberated from the harness of their original context. Recycling makes it possible to see images in a new way. Recycling creates new images. Editing as a window cleaner."[3]

It is no coincidence that this "archival impulse"[4] in art occurs at a time where digitisation makes unprecedented amounts of documents of the past available in an eternal, online presence.[5] On the one hand, the widespread implementation of digital technology has caused a renewed interest in analogue media, as in artist's installations that investigate the ontology of analogue cinema.[6] Besides, the wide-scale implementation of digital technology has greatly affected the collection, description, preservation and accessibility of audiovisual heritage. For example, in the broadcasting archive the digitisation of the entire working process has moved the role of the archivist from the end of the production chain – collecting content right after circulation – to the centre of the digital production environment, making decision about archivable content from a virtual and dynamic collection of media objects from which editors "publish" on different platforms and screens. As a consequence, the reality of the contemporary audiovisual archive has become extremely *dynamic*: as an integral part of the digital workflow the process of archiving no longer has one clear location and takes place throughout all phases of the production process.[7]

The dynamism of contemporary archival practice is also reflected in the theoretical conception of archiving as a *process*. This conception is part of what literary scholars Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney describe as "a larger shift of attention within cultural studies from products to processes, from a focus on discrete cultural artefacts to an interest in the way those artefacts circulate and interact with their environment."[8] In the case of archives this processual approach is based on the idea that the meaning of archival records is located in their *use*, including their use at the various stages of the archival process itself. As archival scholar Eric Ketelaar has argued, archival records have performative power, in that they incite actions: "Records are not only evidence, they communicate, and through communication they can have performative power, they can accomplish something, make a difference in status before and after."[9] These activations or performances of archival records add meaning to them: "Each activation adds a branch to what I have called the semantic genealogy of the record and the archive."[10] This activation of the record occurs at the moment of use – each activation adds new layers of meaning to it. As such, these activations influence the evidentiary status of archival records as documents for remembering the past.

As Claire Waterton points out, using the concept of performativity allows for a view on the archive as a technology "that constitutes not only a record of our representations of the world, but as an active and iterative making of the world and of entities and selves within it."[11] The purpose of the following analysis of *Raw Footage* is to investigate how this performance of archival records – their iteration through various contexts – affects the way we remember war. In a more general sense, this analysis aims to investigate how the performance of archival records can contribute to a dynamic conception of memory.

Aernout Mik

Aernout Mik (born in 1962) is a Dutch artist best known for his staged, video-based works, that are projected in installations that have a clear, sculptural presence in space. He usually films groups of actors in a space that we recognise as relating to reality – a parliament, a trade floor, a supermarket – but that also clearly looks like a stage set. The action appears similarly staged and somewhat puzzling, especially since most of his works contain action and movement in the images but do not have a soundtrack. These films are projected on multiple screens that that are installed in a particular relation to the space.[12]

Thematically, the works refer to "snippets" of reality – the financial crisis, deportation, or a crisis in parliament, as in the multi-channel installation *Vacuum Room* (2005). Yet the works are abstract enough to keep this relation with reality open and ambiguous. In that sense, his works can also be relevant for different actualities. As Mik himself explains in a video on the occasion of his solo show at MoMA in 2009: "Many of my pieces relate to different political or social events but they are not direct images of it – there's a short moment, a short flash that brings in images that you recognize but cannot really place."[13]

A good example is the work *Middlemen* (2001), in which we see a stock market floor or commodity exchange peopled with workers who look anxious and move erratically in the room which is filled with scattered papers. The single-channel video installation was completed in the Summer of 2001, just before the attacks on the Twin Towers, but was read anew in the light of the financial crisis that followed 9/11. Exhibited in New York in 2009, as a centrepiece of Mik's solo exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, the work took on yet another meaning, now being connected to the 2008 financial crisis.[14]

Raw Footage

In his two-channel video installation *Raw Footage* (2006), Mik presents two compilations of unedited news footage on the Bosnian war, projected side by side on two rectangular screens. It concerns footage that has not been shown on television because of its mundane, unspectacular character. We see soldiers waiting, eating, or firing guns at unseen targets while cracking jokes in front of the camera. Other sequences show how even in the circumstances of war people continue their lives as usual: civilians working the land against a backdrop of burning houses, or people walking the street, seemingly unaffected by an air-raid warning.

The installation consists of two different compilation films. Each consists of short sequences or "chapters" that are distinguished from one another by a few seconds of black and that comprise images with similar content, such as various shots of tractors driving down the road against a backdrop of smoke, seemingly caused by bomb attacks. Most of the time the projections run simultaneously, but sometimes they alternate, starting with an image on the left side, which is later joined by similar images on the right side, or vice versa. The two projections show sequences with similar images, such as those of farmers working the land or driving tractors. This is a form of visual rhyming, where an image on the left is "mirrored" on the right side or the other way around. On other occasions the effect is that of contrast, such as in the sequences with the different groups of soldiers where the double projection appears to represent the two conflicting parties, suggesting the representation of two sides of the same conflict. In another sequence, grown-up soldiers on the one side are contrasted with children playing soldiers with real guns on the other.

What do the images in this work document, exactly? What are they evidence of? Besides their content, the use of this footage in Mik's installation focuses our attention to the dimension of *forgetting* that is part and parcel of contemporary media culture, as of the archive.[15] In this case, the material was kept, but not really *remembered* – it only becomes part of our memory of the war in the former Yugoslavia at the moment it is presented in a public setting. The work "complements" – in a modest way – the audiovisual memory of the Bosnian war, by showing its "unspectacular" character (boredom, the need to clean and repair military equipment, the clumsiness involved in removing corpses from a river bank, etc.). As such, this form of reuse constructs a different image of war.

Also, the work plays with the boundaries between reality and fiction. The documentary images are "real" in the sense that they were shot during the war, but often look and feel quite absurd (as the shot of a line-up of men joined by one white sheep). When I saw this work in 2006 in Utrecht, the Netherlands, it was presented in parallel with the installation *Scapegoats*.[16] This is a work that is more characteristic for Mik's oeuvre: we see a stage set – a large, unspecified sports arena – in which groups of people on beds are supervised by uniformed guards, and in which acts are performed along a non-explicit scenario. This fictional work, when installed parallel to *Raw Footage*, works to intensify the documentary images used in the latter work. In a way, it shows a reality that the documentary images used for *Raw Footage* do not show – that of the day-to-day affairs in a refugee camp, or a similar place of holding. One can see this as an example of *imagining history* – using invention and fabulation to achieve a more realistic impression of reality.

As has been argued many times, amongst others by Mary-Ann Doane in her book *The Emergence of Cinematic Time*, the realistic impression of cinema – or, by extension, any moving image – heavily depends on manipulation and illusion: the greater the manipulation and illusion, the more *real* these moving images appear to be.[17] This characteristics helps us to understand the effect of Mik's works. His tactic often is to omit certain acts or gestures that are crucial for understanding the overall action. Or he leaves out certain expected manipulations of audiovisual content, such as an explanatory voice-over, the alterations of total shots and close-ups, or the move from one camera position to the next. In that sense, he plays with the way in which film and television mediate our perception of social and political reality. The omission of certain cuts and the inherent changes in viewpoint make us aware of what we normally expect from audiovisual media, and thus how strongly constructed their representation of reality are. Besides, the inclusion of references to specific social or political events triggers us to find a connection to that past or present reality. At the same time, the omission of certain crucial explanatory acts, gestures or commentary prevents us from forming a direct, uncritical interpretation of the events hinted at. The effect is that the viewer starts to notice all kinds of details; your eye is drawn to aspects of the image that you normally do not notice.

Moving the Memory of War

In his text "Our Balkanist Gaze," film scholar Thomas Elsaesser points out that most media productions about the war in the former Yugoslavia construct the people that lived through that war as victims; in that sense the Western spectator remains *at a safe distance* and can take upon him/herself the – fictional – role of the benefactor.[18] Here, then, the formal conventions of the news reports and documentaries on TV function to create a distance between on the one hand the event and its victims, and the empowered spectator on the other: it was a war that took place somewhere else, and affected other people. And even in the case of the failure of Dutchbat in Srebrenica the media coverage focused very much on the Dutch side of things, keeping the distance to the region in which the genocide took place.

How does *Raw Footage* "move" these mainstream mediated memories of the Bosnian war? In order to answer this question I refer to Patricia Pisters' ideas on the *neuro-image*.

In her new book *The Neuro-Image: A Deleuzian Filmphilosophy for Digital Screen Culture*, film scholar Patricia Pisters argues that watching moving images on a screen has a direct effect on the spectator, at a neurological level.[19] This neurological approach to cinema spectatorship is inspired by philosopher Gilles Deleuze's dictum "the brain is the screen." In her book, Pisters refers to research from the field of neuroscience on mirror-neurons. Mirror-neurons play an important role in letting people develop affective relations with others. When we see someone crying, the parts of our brain involved in that physical action and the related emotions will also become active – on a neurological level we simulate the process that take's place in the crier's brain. As neuroscientist Antonio Damasio has argued in *Looking for Spinoza*, this primary, physical process, that takes place both in the brain of the crier and that of the observer, is followed by a connection to the more conscious side of emotions – in this example, feelings of sadness.[20] Such activation of mirror-neurons is not limited to "live" settings: experiments have demonstrated that watching actions on film or video has the same effect. Consequently, Pisters argues that the power of images is more direct than we have ever conceived before: watching images on a screen has a *direct* and *embodied* effect in our brains. As she concludes: "It is now possible to speak of spectatorship in terms of becoming: we quite literally become what we see, at least on a neurological level. [...] We are truly affected, touched by what we see."[21]

Pisters' conception of spectatorship in these neurological terms provides an interesting perspective on Mik's *Raw Footage*. What this installation shares with Mik's other work, is the emphasis on certain gestures, movements and expressions of emotion that are not embedded in a clearly delineated narrative or context. Yet, in spite of the absence of a clear frame of reference, or exactly *because* of the lack of this explanatory framework, we do develop affection for the protagonists of his films. Quite literally we simulate their emotions in our own bodies – at least on a neurological level. This makes it impossible to maintain the distance that characterises mainstream media representations of this war.

Also, one can argue that Mik's choice among the footage at Reuters and ITN focuses on the ways in which people and animals survive in the extreme conditions of a civil war. Many shots emphasise that life goes on: people scurry the streets while snipers fire overhead, farmers work their land while houses are burning in the background, animals find their way amidst the debris. By emphasising these scenes, *Raw Footage* portrays the people in the region as *survivors*, allowing them a different role in the mediated memory of the conflict, as active agents rather than passive victims.[22] In Deleuzian terms, the work is thus "creating a people:" "When a people is created, it's through its own resources, but in a way that links up with something in art [...] or links up art to what it lacked [...] it's [...] a question of a 'fabulation' in which a people and art both share."[23]

In Deleuze's view, artworks are "war machines" that can operate as "circuit breakers" by occupying space and time, or inventing new space-times.[24] For Deleuze, a crucial aspect of this reconfiguration of space and time is that it is not designed to communicate a clear message: "Creating has always been something different from communicating. The key thing may be to create vacuoles of non-communication, circuit breakers, so we can elude control."[25] In the case of Mik's installation, the circuit that is broken is that of the mediated memory of the war in the former Yugoslavia: the memory of the past as created by the mainstream media representations of it. By highlighting the spaces, moments and actions that do not fit the mainstream memory of the war, and presenting them in a form that does not construct a clear narrative but that affects us directly, via our brains, *Raw Footage* "breaks the circuit" of this mainstream memory and invites a new, affective engagement with the events documented in this footage.

Deleuze's philosophy has often been criticised as being non-political, lacking the agency that political action requires. As Patricia Pisters indicates, the basic charges are that Deleuze's critique on representation and ideology seems to prohibit any contact with political reality and that his (and Guattari's) philosophy leaves no room for specific voices of others.[26] Pisters convincingly argues, though, that Deleuze's conception of "the virtual" is closely connected to the real world:

> *In a Deleuzian system of thought it is wrong to see the virtual as "out of this world" – the virtual is an immanent force that has to be taken into account in this world. The consequence of this circulation between the virtual and the actual is that the virtual is also real (albeit on a more invisible level – in our minds, in memories, in fantasy/imagination, in the invisible layers of images and culture).*[27]

In this way, as I have argued above with regards to the parallel exhibition of *Raw Footage* and *Scapegoats*, virtual images can emphasize the socio-political and historical reality that surrounds the actual ones. In the words of Pisters: "It is not a matter of reality being in a limbo, but a matter of the virtuality surrounding the actual images that make them ever more powerful and infuse the images with socio-political and historical layers."[28]

The political dimension of artworks like *Raw Footage* is also located in their style. For Deleuze, style as politics is marked by a mixing up of codes into something new and uncodeable.[29] It is precisely because of the escaping of established media codes – the explanatory voice-over or soundtrack, the alteration of close-ups and total shots, a clear narrative – that Mik's work has political relevance.

Conclusion

To conclude, how are we to capture these moves in the memory of war? How can make them productive for future processes and practices of remembrance?

As any type of reuse, the use of news footage in Mik's installation adds new layers of meaning to those images. As Elizabeth Edwards points out in her book *Raw Histories*, an archival document's meaning, whether photograph or audiovisual record, does not so much depend on what it is *of*, but in which contexts it is made, distributed, kept and seen.[30] In that sense, all uses of archival material, including that of the archival process, add new layers of meaning to the record and thus influence what it testifies of.

I think we should consider the afterlife of archival documents as part and parcel of the archival process, rethinking archives not as stable sites of memory but as performative processes that inform *remembrance*. We should find ways to document the various iterations of archival footage, their lifecycle of uses. Only then can we keep track of what they have come to mean, including the circuit breaking actions on the small scale of artistic work. In that way, we will do justice to the fact that the memory of war is never stable and complete, but dynamic and changing, and create room within the dominant discourse for the artistic circuit breakers that encourage us to critically reflect on the process of remembering war.

Notes

[1] This research is a first attempt to articulate the mechanism through which the archival footage used in *Raw Footage* establishes a connection between real historical events, the media that document and mediate those events, the settings in which the material is reused and the bodies and minds of the spectators in which these images and sounds mingle with previously established memories of the (mediated) events. These ideas will be further developed in my forthcoming book *Performing the Archive: Tracing Audiovisual Heritage in the Digital Age*.

[2] See, amongst others, Charles Merewether (ed.), *The Archive*, Whitechapel/MIT Press, London-Cambridge, MA 2006; Jane Connarty, Josephine Lanyon (eds.), *Ghosting: The Role of the Archive within Contemporary Artist's Film and Video*, Picture This Moving Image, Bristol, UK 2006; Okwui Enwezor, *Archive Fever: Uses of the Document in Contemporary Art*, International Center of Photography/Steidl, New York-Göttingen 2008 and Christa Blümlinger, *Kino aus zweiter Hand: Zur Ästhetik materieller Aneignung im Film und in der Medienkunst*, Vorwerk 8, Berlin 2009.

[3] Fiona Tan, *Kingdom of Shadows*, in Mariska van den Berg, Gabriele Franziska Götz (eds.), *Scenario: Fiona Tan*, Van den Berg & Wallroth/NAi Publishers, Amsterdam-Rotterdam 2000, p. 127. Elsewhere I have discussed Tan's use of colonial footage as a specific technology of memory: see Julia Noordegraaf, *Facing Forward with Found Footage: Displacing Colonial Footage in* Mother Dao *and the*

Work of Fiona Tan, in Liedeke Plate, Anneke Smelik (eds.), *Technologies of Memory in the Arts*, Palgrave, Basingstoke 2009, pp. 172-187.

[4] Hal Foster, "An Archival Impulse," in *October*, no. 110, 2004, pp. 3-22.

[5] Andreas Huyssen, "Present Pasts: Media, Politics, Amnesia," in *Public Culture*, vol. 12, no. 1, 2000, pp. 21-38.

[6] See Matilde Nardelli, "Moving Pictures: Cinema and Its Obsolescence in Contemporary Art," in *Journal of Visual Culture*, vol. 8, no. 3, 2009, pp. 243-264.

[7] For a detailed analysis of the effect of digitization on broadcasting archives and television history, see Julia Noordegraaf, "Who Knows Television? Online Access and the Gatekeepers of Knowledge," in *Critical Studies in Television: Scholarly Studies in Small Screen Fictions, Television Archives: Accessing TV History* (edited by Lez Cooke and Robin Nelson), vol. 5, no. 2, 2010, pp. 1-19.

[8] Astrid Erll, Ann Rigney (eds.), *Mediation, Remediation and the Dynamics of Cultural Memory*, De Gruyter, Berlin 2009, p. 3.

[9] Eric Ketelaar, "The Performative Power of Records," unpublished paper, presented in Japan, 2009, p. 10.

[10] *Idem*, p. 7. See Eric Ketelaar, "Tacit Narratives: The Meaning of Archives," in *Archival Science*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2001, pp. 131-141.

[11] Claire Waterton, "Exerimenting with the Archive: STS-ers As Analysts and Co-constructors of Databases and Other Archival Forms," in *Science, Technology, & Human Values*, vol. 35, no. 5, 2010, p. 651.

[12] See Libby Hruska (ed.), *Aernout Mik*, Catalogue of exhibition with the same title, New York, The Museum of Modern Art, 6 May-27 July 2009, Museum of Modern Art, New York 2009.

[13] "Aernout Mik discusses his exhibition at MoMA," *YouTube*, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DmnIKihcBHw, last access on 8 August 2011.

[14] Ken Johnson in a review of the show describes the work as "eerily prophetic." Ken Johnson, "Video Spectacles, Imagined or, in One Case, Real," in *New York Times*, 21 May 2009, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/22/arts/design/22mik.html, last access 9 August 2011.

[15] See Andreas Huyssen, "Present Pasts: Media, Politics, Amnesia," cit., and Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago-London 1998 [1995], pp. 25-31.

[16] *Raw Footage/Scapegoats*, solo exhibition by Arnout Mik at BAK (Basis voor Aktuele Kunst), Utrecht, the Netherlands, 1 October-24 December 2006.

[17] Mary Ann Doane, *The Emergence of Cinematic Time: Modernity, Contingency, the Archive*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA 2002, p. 213.

[18] Thomas Elsaesser, *Our Balkanist Gaze: About Memory's No Man's Land*, in Id., *European Cinema: Face to Face with Hollywood*, Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam 2005, pp. 358-359.

[19] Patricia Pisters, *The Neuro-Image: A Deleuzian Filmphilosophy for Digital Screen Culture*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA forthcoming.

[20] Antonio Damasio, *Looking for Spinoza: Joy, Sorrow, and the Feeling Brain*, Harcourt, Orlando, FL 2003.

[21] Patricia Pisters, *The Neuro-Image: A Deleuzian Filmphilosophy for Digital Screen Culture*, cit., chapter 3.

[22] See Thomas Elsaesser, *Our Balkanist Gaze: About Memory's No Man's Land*, cit., p. 366.

[23] Gilles Deleuze, *Control and Becoming*, in Id., *Negotiations 1972-1990*, translated by Martin Joughin, Columbia University Press, New York 1995, p. 174. See also Patricia Pisters, *Violence and Laughter:*

Paradoxes of Nomadic Thought in Postcolonial Cinema, in Simone Bignall, Paul Patton (eds.), *Deleuze and the Postcolonial*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh 2010, p. 208.

[24] Gilles Deleuze, *Control and Becoming*, cit., p. 172.

[25] *Idem*, p. 175.

[26] Patricia Pisters, *Violence and Laughter: Paradoxes of Nomadic Thought in Postcolonial Cinema*, cit., p. 202.

[27] *Idem*, p. 204.

[28] *Idem*, p. 206.

[29] *Idem*, p. 211.

[30] Elizabeth Edwards, *Raw Histories: Photographs*, Anthropology and Museums, Berg, Oxford 2001, p. 88.

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The Archive of Images in Contemporary Art or the Disorganization of the Archontic Corpus of Actuality

The figure of archive seems to be increasingly generalised in art. This can be noticed in certain contemporary artistic practices that share a similar manner of working, where the recollection and accumulation of images, photographic records or videos, as their montage and their diverse displaying, play a central role. There has been in Europe, only during the last year, at least five expositions pointing in that direction: *Archive Generation* (Castello Sforzesco, Milan, Italy); *Lost and Found: Queerying the Archive* (Bildmuseet, Umea, Sweden); *Critique of Archival Reason* (Royal Hibernian Academy, Dublin, Ireland); *A History of Irritated Material* (Raven Row, London, England) and *Atlas ¿Cómo llevar el mundo a cuestas?* (Museo Reina Sofía, Madrid, Spain).

The latter has been defined by Hal Foster not only as a "tendency" but also as the expression of an "archival impulse" in the art under which the artist "seeks to make historical information, often lost or displaced, physically present. To this end they elaborate on the found image, object, and text, and favor the installation format as they do so."[1] To Foster, this impulse is not new, it can already be found in some works of the historical avant-garde, such as the photofiles of Alexander Rodchenko or the photofiles of John Heartfield. Nevertheless, this archival impulse can be understood only considering the cultural transformation's context of the beginning of the 20th century, those derived from the industrial development and the social expansion of the technological medium of recording, reproducing and distributing of the images. Thus, the new technological means that began to be available in the traditional field of art will also have an influence on the mutation of art itself through the re-orientation of the artistic practice and the change in the mode of production in many of its works. A text written by the Russian artist Varvara Stepanova already in 1921 is symptomatic of this climate.[2] She stated back then:

> *Composition is the contemplative approach of the artist in his work. Technique and Industry have confronted art with the problem of construction as an active process, and not a contemplative reflection. The "sanctity" of a work as a single entity is destroyed. The museum which was the treasury of art is now transformed into an archive.*[3]

A similar idea echoes in the famous essay which Walter Benjamin wrote later in 1936[4] where he indicated that the technological reproducibility of the image will set the necessary conditions for the emancipation of the work of art from its ritual value, pulverising thus its "aura,"[5] replacing its distance with the proximity that massive technical reproduction seems to make possible. From Benjamin's perspective, the technological reproducibility overflows the autonomy of the "art sphere" by dispersing through the social field the different systems of recording, storage and projection of images, which act as their newest means. In this sense, Benjamin is not concerned with art itself but with the tests over the political potential of the new technologies being practiced by the art. In his *A Short History of Photography* (1931), for instance, he will emphasise Eugène Atget's production – one of the precursors of the contemporary "archive fever" – who between 1895 and 1927 came to gather 10.000 snapshots of Paris. His photographs traced a breakdown through the motifs of portrait and the monumental panorama, focusing on places that normally go unnoticed and in those forgotten objects. Showing at the same time a city emptied of its inhabitants. This way, Benjamin argues, photography "presages a salutary estrangement between man and his environment, thus clearing the ground for the politically trained eye before which all intimacies serve the illumination of detail."[6]

The images of Atget's archive were codified in a complex and enigmatic system, similar to the one used for the files in libraries and in topographic collections, and with categories near to research and historic documentation. This fact made evident the link that the technical reproduction have with the archive, that even seems to be constitutive of the visual record apparatus themselves. Like Okwui Enwezor correctly points out:

> *[...] the camera is literally an archiving machine, every photograph, every film is a priori an archival object. [...] The infinitely reproducible, duplicatable image, whether a still picture or a moving image, derived from a negative or digital camera, becomes, in the realm of its mechanical reproduction or digital distribution or multiple projection, a truly archival image.*[7]

A documentary will appears too in August Sander's album *People of the 20th century* whose more than 500 images captured between 1927 and 1929 attempt to represent the Weimar Republic's society. This sort of social cartography made through the photographs of different kind of people of his time takes form in seven different categories.[8] Walter Benjamin remarked also the political function that the *technical-image* acquires here, answering to a vital need, namely: the exposition of the structure and the social reality of a given moment that, to the perception's effects deepens the knowledge that the citizenry must have about their socio-political environment. That is why, to Benjamin, "Sander's work is more than a photography book: it's an exercises atlas."[9]

Also at the beginnings of the 20th century the work that inaugurates most exemplary the relations between image/archive and memory is conceived: Aby Warburg's *Atlas Mnemosyne*. This work is the construction of a particular mnemonic model of western humanistic culture that attempts to search and to make visible the traces of its inception from classical antiquity until its latent expressions in the present. The 25.000 photographs that the *Atlas Mnemosyne* came to gather between 1925 and 1929, were displayed in dozens of panels where each image was put in relation with others regardless of any chronological order, hierarchy or rigid aesthetical pattern. And even more, Warburg made an endless combinatory displacement of his images from panel to panel.

Well, to us, the important part of Warburg's Atlas, according to Benjamin Buchloh, is his particular manner of tracing historical processes, establishing typologies and displaying relations between different temporalities, which seems to conflict with the avant-garde intentions of providing an instant presence of its works through shock and the perceptual dis-rupture.[10] Even more, following this last idea, Anna María Guasch[11] has recently pointed out that this is due to the fact that in the works of Warburg, Atget and Sander and also in others like the teaching panels of Malevich or the collages and the albums of Hannah Höch, we find actually the first expressions of a new art's paradigm, that is acting from the beginnings of the 20th century to our very days. This paradigm, of course, it's the one of the *archive*.

This paradigm will keep on acting during the post-war period in the neo avant-garde works. For instance, in the photographic series that Bernard and Hilla Becher began in the late 50s, where they documented the factory buildings of the early German industrial architecture. As much the objectivity with which the Bechers sought to register those "industrial monuments," focusing only in the quality and the function of those structures and not in the names of the architects, as the typologies and series in which their photographs were organised, are clearly related with foundational work of August Sander. In that same way, this archive of the industrial architecture works too as a testimony of a historical past that little by little disappears from the urban landscape. If, in one hand, the industrial archive of the Bechers is vinculated in the continuity and the objectivity of its style to the Sander's works, on the other hand, the discontinuity and the heterogeneity of Warburg's Atlas seems to have a remarkable influence on the Atlas project that Gerhard Richter began in 1962, kept as a "work in progress" nowadays and that gathers more than 5000 photographical documents. Here there are assorted kinds of images: journal photographs and illustrated magazines, amateur photographs, but also photographs created by himself on occasions from his own pictorial work. At the same time, his individual documents are representations of a different sort that Richter gathers in panels, highlighting in the first biographical and familiar motifs to open up and combine later with diverse kind of images. Also, just like Buchloh points out, Warburg and Richter's projects confront themselves in different contexts to a crisis condition of subjective and social memory, but while the *Atlas Mnemosyne* seems to trust in the possibilities of the new images reproduction mediums yet, Richter's Atlas apparently:

> *[...] considers photography and its various practices as a system of ideological domination, more precisely, as one of the instruments with which collective anomie, amnesia, and repression are socially inscribed.*[12]

Nevertheless, Richter's Atlas finds a strategy to dismantle that condition of the media, destabilizing his amnesic effect by a sudden incorporation of the photographs of victims of a concentration camp, confronting since then the spectator with "a perpetual pendulum between the death of reality in the photograph and the reality of death in the mnemonic image."[13]

What is important to us, is that the complications of Richter's mnemonic project faces with mass media images, insinuate too the difficulties in which every image archive created from art with a political pursuit finds itself: the conflict with the visual archive that pervades the social field. The latter may be forgotten when the archive is defined as a metaphor, a tendency or even a paradigm of contemporary art. That the archive notion works as an artistic figure doesn't have to distract us then, from the fact that Derrida highlighted, namely, that the *arkhe* refers at the same time to the *origin* and to a *nomological principle*, both factors conjugate in the "*domiciliation*" of the archive: in the *arkheion* and its occupants, the *archons*. They are, on the one hand, guardians of the official document storage and holders of the hermeneutic authority over those, (enforcing *the law* over the document). On the other hand, they are the ones who exercise the functions of identification and classification of the archive and the *power of consignation*: the gathering and the coordination of the signs "in a single *corpus*," which is to say, in "a system or in a synchrony in which all elements articulate the unity of an ideal configuration."[14] Therefore, all archive takes place in a crossing between topological and nomological, and that is why Derrida doesn't hesitate in pointing out that the archive issue "runs through the whole of the field and in truth determines politics from top to bottom as *res publica*."[15]

The art field is not immune to this configuration of the archontic power of consignation, and the museum has acted in many senses as its specific place of domiciliation as the archive of identification and classification of art's signs. A first critique to this archontic power of the museum can be founded in Duchamp's *Boîte-en-valise*, a case in which he introduces photographs and reproductions of his own works emulating the gesture of accumulation and archiving of the museographic institution itself.

Nevertheless, we stated that the archontic power of the archive as *res publica*, just as the means of its technological reproducibility, goes beyond the field of art. And, in this sense, the rising of photography in the 19th century has not been isolated from this power, because, according to Allan Sekula, the photography subverted the privileges of *bourgeois* portrait art, making proliferate daguerreotypes in other classes, but at the same time "photography began to establish and delimitate the field of the *other*, defining as much the general aspect (the typology) and the particular case of deviation and social pathologies."[16]

This way, a series of body image archives rise, which operate as social control tools. For example, the archive of Alphonse Bertillon French medic, anthropologist and inventor of the so called "police file," who in 1882 was head of the Paris Police Judiciary Identity Department. The "police file" was the main instrument for his method of documentation and localization of criminals starting from anthropometric measurements of the head and the hands. Other important archives, in this sense, were those of the British Francis Galton, founder of modern eugenics and the method of "composite portraits," which consisted in the gathering of multiple individual images for the statistical processing of their common features, aiming to obtain a typical and generic image at the same time. This is the case, for instance, of the genetic family.

Thus was traced in the 19th century the discursive order of positivism by means of the technological reproducibility of the images, configuring an archive that, according to Michel Foucault's understanding, is "the law of what can be said, the system that governs the appearance of statements as unique events,"[17] and we could also add, the law of what can be seen and that governs the appearance of images.

It would not be inappropriate, then, to relate the role of photography to the expansion of the impetus of an archontic power in the social field, demonstrated in a more and more generalised production and organisation of images, which is translated, at the same time, to a certain organisation of the social life. Later, in the 20th century, a paradigmatic case of what we seek to state is the one of the Farm Security Administration (FSA), a program of photographic research raised in the context of the *New Deal* policies and that were meant to produce visual documents of poverty and inequality in the United States since 1935. In 1942 this program counted with an archive of over 270 thousand *clichés*. The images that the photographers of the FSA registered were provided to journals and magazines, but not without passing before through a previous filter and control of the photographic archives by the director of the program himself, Roy Striker, who under the criteria of:

> *[…] showing the quality of those photographed and the immense dignity of the poor at any price […] censored – perforing the negatives – more than a hundred thousand images of the FSA that did not adjust to this vision.*[18]

Thus, the FSA happens to be in a great measure, a kind of precedent of the editorial politics of contemporary media. Our experience with them and the *actuality* which present us their information are in no case a sheer product of global mediation. Rather, they derive from a set of technical and selective operations, cuts and points of view, even there where it is presented "live and direct" to us. Just as Derrida remarks, the new technological means of archiving (the new information and communication technologies) posses not only a capacity of recording, storing and transmitting images, but also, and mainly, function as an *archive-archiving* that becomes a producer of the events. This is to say, the archive, at the same time, records and produces the events, in an operation where the archontic power organizes and defines what we irreflexibly call our "actuality."

It is at this point where an art that problematizes *the archive can activate the political potential* that Benjamin saw in the new technologies, because by using almost the same mediums of the mass media, contemporary art can challenge the archontic organisation of the actuality corpus which is enacted from transnational telecommunications and information holdings, as from the political control that in many occasions is applied over the media.

We could mention many artistic works aiming today in that direction, in which the *archive is not only a metaphor, a supply of the artwork or a mere aesthetic resource*, but rather, it expresses itself as *a conflict or a political praxis that seeks to disorganize the archontic corpus of the actuality*. Before I finish, I'd like to highlight two of them: the work of the Chilean artist Alfredo Jaar and that of the Catalan Antoni Muntadas.

Some of the works of Jaar are significant regarding what we want to state here. In 1994 Jaar gets shocked by the genocide in Rwanda, where in no more than a hundred days and under the total indifference of the international community, over a million people were slaughtered by the Hutus militia.

Three weeks after the massacre, Alfredo Jaar travelled to Rwanda and, during almost a month, compiled the survivor's testimonies and also took thousands of photographs of concentration camps and places of massacre. He then spent six years rehearsing representation strategies that could endow with sense the comprehension of the catastrophe and the trauma without taking advantage of the sheer impact of the images. Inside that project, one of his works of 1994 *Untitled* (*Newsweek*) shows all of *Newsweek*'s covers from April 6th 1994, the day when the genocide in Rwanda started, until the 1st of August of that same year, date in which the magazine gave its first cover to the massacre that had been happening for sixteen weeks already. Beside each cover, the artist wrote what had happened that week in Rwanda and that *Newsweek* neglected.

A similar critique to that configuration of the mass media archive is the one that Jaar presents under the title *Searching for Africa in LIFE*, a media mosaic of the LIFE magazine covers published between 1936 and 1996, where the spectators are invited to explore the representation of Africa that has been proposed to them for more than seventy years. This work sets itself as a critique "of those media that 'document' the real and administrate at the same time the way in which we see it."[19]

On the other side, the 1994 project, *The File Room* of Antoni Muntadas is a practice of confrontation against the censorship of the media. The Spanish artist was hired in 1989 by the Spanish Television Network to make a documentary about his own work. Instead of that, Muntadas worked with audiovisual materials from the Franquist dictatorship stored in the network. After two years the artist finished his work, he got paid but the documentary was not transmitted. It is after this experience that Muntadas, with the material obtained, conceived *The File Room*, an installation of seven computer surrounded by 138 folders with black metal and with a hypertext that connects video, audio and textual information, attached to a memory of central data archiving.

This way, from each of the computers, the spectators had access to hundreds of cases regarding censored information through the history. But also, in a computer placed in the middle of the room, the spectators themselves could enter new information of censure cases in the database, increasing thus the counter-information that the project showed. With this work, Antonio Muntadas not only made an early use of the Internet as a support for artistic work, but also performed from art a clear political gesture using the exposition room as a collective platform to counteract the censorship and to de-archive the classified information that the archontic powers administrated.

Artistic practices like these challenge the ideal configuration and the coherence of the unitary and ideal corpus that is produced by the mass-media archives, and most of all the hegemonic visions that those create of the political and social actuality. They disrupt the configuration of the informational archives to propose new matrixes of citation and juxtaposition of the images, inciting this way to critical reflection of the audiences. We would like to finish by making ours this Victor del Río's statement:

> *[...] the utilisation of the cinema, the video and the narrative structures of mass communication in different supports is enacted in [some practices] of the contemporary art against its naturalisation in the social sphere. The art becomes thus, a sort of self-conscience of the media with a possibility to establish a critical vision over its deployment in the public sphere.*[20]

Notes

[1] Hal Foster, "An Archival Impulse," in *October*, no. 110, Fall 2004, p. 4.

[2] The text was read at the constructivist exposition *5X5=25*, that took place in Moscow in 1921.

[3] Camila Grey, *The Russian Experiment*, Thames and Hudson, New York 1971, pp. 250-251.

[4] Walter Benjamin, *La obra de arte en la época de su reproductibilidad técnica*, Itaca, México 2003.

[5] This is, abolishing the distance in which its "*here and now*" appeared before the ones who contemplated it and replaced it with the proximity that massive technical reproduction seems to make possible.

[6] Walter Benjamin, *Obras. Libro II*, Abada, Madrid 2007, vol. 1, p. 395 (my translation).

[7] Okwui Enwezor, *Archive Fever: Uses of the Document in Contemporary Art*, International Center of Photography, New York 2008, p. 12.

[8] August Sander, *August Sander*, Konemann, Colonia 1997.

[9] Walter Benjamin, *Obras. Libro II*, cit., p. 397 (my translation).

[10] Benjamin Buchloh, "Gerhard Richter's Atlas: The Anomic Archive," in *October*, no. 88, Spring 1999, p. 121.

[11] Anna Maria Guasch, *Arte y Archivo, 1920-2010. Genealogías, tipologías y discontinuidades*, Akal, Madrid 2011.

[12] Benjamin Buchloh, "Gerhard Richter's Atlas: The Anomic Archive," cit., p. 134.

[13] *Idem*, p. 144.

[14] Jacques Derrida, *Mal de archivo. Una impresión freudiana*, Trotta, Madrid 1997, p. 11 (my translation).

[15] *Idem*, p. 9 (my translation).

[16] Allan Sekula, *El cuerpo y el archivo*, in Glòria Picazo, Jorge Ribalta (eds.), *Indiferencia y singularidad*, Gustavo Gili, Barcelona 2003, p. 137 (my translation).

[17] Michel Foucault, *La arqueología del saber*, Siglo Veintiuno Editores, Madrid 2009, p. 170 (my translation).

[18] Pierre-Jean Amar, *El fotoperiodismo*, La Marca, Buenos Aires 2005, p. 45 (my translation).

[19] Adriana Valdés, *Prefacio a la edición chilena*, in VV.AA., *Alfredo Jaar. La política de las imágenes*, Metales Pesados, Santiago de Chile 2008, p. 33 (my translation).

[20] Víctor del Río, *Factografía. Vanguardia y comunicación de masas*, Abada, Madrid 2010, p. 212 (my translation).

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Obfuscations of the Visible: Creating Memory through Not Looking at Christian Boltanski's Archives

Often in his installations, Christian Boltanski creates archives of objects and images that are obscured, hidden in boxes, unidentifiable, referenced but not present. Like the past that has been filed away for a moment that may or may not come to pass in the future, the objects and images of Boltanski's archives are always absent. The environment created by Boltanski poses as visual, a visual re-archiving of what has often been thrown away, or left out of the official archives of history. As such his works promise that the image or object will function as a witness, or gateway to the lost past. However, time and again, this promise is often only a pretext to lure us into a world in which we listen, touch, experience and imagine, activities that take place after and beyond looking at images and objects in Boltanski's work. And through the experiences of the other senses, we enter into an experience of an archive – the empty or absent archive that is created by Boltanski. This experience of an empty archive had by the visitor to Boltanski's exhibitions gives presence to a past, not *the* past, but *a* past that changes and shifts with the uniqueness of the viewer that enters the empty archive. Thus Boltanski transfers the responsibility to remember away from the object or image that is seen to the visitor who experiences the empty archive.

In this paper, I explore Boltanski's privileging of senses other than sight as a way of enabling memory, a memory that is only possible in the presence of Boltanski's installations. Inside the spaces created for and by Boltanski's installations, images and objects entice the visitor inside the archive to take part in a process of witnessing a past at which neither she nor Boltanski's images and objects were ever present. The experience had inside the archive is not the kind of "post-memory" Marianne Hirsch discusses, for there are no memories being passed from one generation to another.[1] Rather, the memories are given presence for the first time, they are created in the context of Boltanski's exhibition. And the presence of memory is dependent on the secrets that have been stored (or not), secreted, archived, out of sight in the mind and life of the visitor.

For Boltanski, seeing – or knowing – the image or object that he archives would be to destroy the power of that image as a gateway to the visitor's memory. It is not simply access to the archive that facilitates memory, but the denial of physical, visual access to the past. Thus, my paper engages with and questions the common critical claim that Boltanski's practice is a "visualization of memory," a "visualization of time."[2] Critics have repeatedly suggested, even argued that Boltanski's work is involved in giving an image to processes that transcend time such as memory, death, loss and identity. However, careful consideration of his later work in particular suggests that memory and time are brought to life through a refusal of visual access to the narrative that might once have been present to the images or objects he effectively re-archives. And even though Boltanski's re-archiving places the objects in a trajectory that motions towards death – all of our deaths, not just those of the people represented – if we remove the visual weight of the past from what is represented, and if we replace it with the experience of our other senses, Boltanski's images and objects open up to a moment of hope when they enable the creation of our memories.

To cite an early and familiar example, in his *Monument* series from the 1980s, Boltanski re-photographs, often amateur photographs, portraits of individuals in their daily lives, children's photographs from school yearbooks, or communities of people. He removes the identity of the face by blurring the image, blackening the eyes, thus denying our desire to look closer, to recognize or identify the person photographed. Boltanski's images refuse our look through the use of the blur, through enlargement, and the placement of a spotlight at the end of a bent arm obscures the eyes, leads to the light hang in front of the photograph. These obstructions function to erase the identity of an already anonymous face. Nevertheless, this erasure of individual memory, or the memory of an individual, opens up to the possibility of a collective memory and historical memory of an event it is likely the viewer did not experience. It is also an event that is nowhere present either to the photographs or Boltanski's re-photographing of them.

The darkening of the eyes, the disintegration of facial expressions, the use of spotlights on the photo, the serial arrangement of multiple, nearly identical images across a wall, all function to create altars to the memory of those in the image who may not be dead.[3] Irrespective of who is photographed, to even the most unprepared and unsuspecting of viewers, these anonymous, unidentifiable faces in close up remind us of the millions who were killed in the Nazi Holocaust. In them we see the faces of those who were documented on their arrival at Auschwitz, not for posterity, but for archiving, as a guarantee that death was on its way.[4] To be sure, it is not, as Roland Barthes would have it, the ghost of the one who is pictured that is given an effigy in Boltanski's work, it is not the one we see, the one pictured. Rather, the "soul" of the person behind these images is someone else, someone not seen.[5] When we look at the multiple images of anonymous faces, all alike, yet subtly different, we understand them to represent all of those who died, anonymously, in the Nazi Holocaust.

In another example: in the haunting *El Caso* (1988) installation in the permanent collection of the Kunstsammlung NRW K21 in Düsseldorf, three walls are filled with portrait photographs of people reported by the Madrid newspaper (*El Caso*) to have been murdered. Each photographed face is blown up to a blurred portrait. Again, a desk light shines directly onto the image, leads fall across it, making it even more difficult to look at the image, and even more impossible to identify the face. Not seeing and not being seen is the power of these images. Once again, it is not the identity of the person photographed that is important, what Boltanski stresses is that each person photographed has been murdered. The obscurity of each individual's features is the basis of the photograph's meaning and continued significance.

Inside a biscuit tin attached to the wall beneath each photograph Boltanski has apparently placed an image of the murdered corpse at the scene of the crime.[6] The blurb at the entrance to the installation room tells us that the photographs we cannot see in the biscuit tins are taken by police at the scene of the murder. Not seeing is, once again, the force of these images: because we cannot see the corpse in the box, thus we cannot see inside the empty archive, and so our imaginations are animated. In the visitor's imagination there is no doubt that the image is hidden in the tin because the body of the murdered is too mutilated, too deformed for our eyes to bear.

In turn, we don't need to see the image inside the tin because we are also certain that the photograph above the tin is the face of the one to whom the body belongs. Thus, the face we cannot fully recognize is all we need (not) to see in order identify the trauma of the murdered.

This refusal on Boltanski's part to reveal the identity of the person in the blurred photograph, under the desk light, in the tin box is what makes each "memorial" disturbing. Because our inability to perceive physically leaves us to imagine the horror of what happened to the victims, what their bodies might look like. Each photographed face is a specter that comes back to life; having exceeded the limits of the tin in which it is supposedly archived, have exceeded the limits of the body that once was. According to this process, the identity of the murdered, all murdered people are reanimated in the visitor's imagination. These are spirits that will not die or disappear, they will not be shut up in the tin, spirits that persist in coming back to haunt the museum visitor.

But in its reincarnation, this spirit is a collective spirit, it is an imagined presence that forces us to confront ourselves and our need to mourn dead people we never knew. The spirit is not necessarily that of the anonymous person in the image, or the box, after-all, the pictured is only a fictional representation, an empty archive fashioned by an artist. Connected to each other by the leads of the lights that obscure them, the ambiguous and anonymous faces demand we pick up the thread and continue to weave their fabricated stories. Thus, their secrets spawn our mourning and our memories of events that are now absent, events that may not have anything to do with the photographs we see. In *El Caso*, we are enticed into a world of archived images and objects, a world that claims to represent a memorial to those murdered. We step into the archive and take part in a process of witnessing a past at which neither we nor those in Boltanski's images and objects were ever present.

Another wall of the room is filled with linen sheets, neatly packed, cleaned but not ironed and placed on a shelf. With the absence of a visible human connection to the sheets, we immediately begin to imagine the people who they once covered. And of course we connect them to the faces in the photographs. Are they the sheets that covered the corpse in the morgue? Or perhaps they are the sheets that were used as shrouds for burial? Their use and relationship to the photographs under the lights, inside the tin boxes are unclear, and thanks to this ambiguity, we are invited to imagine their significance to the narratives that nevertheless only exist in our imaginations. We are convinced that the people who once used these sheets no longer need them. And we assume that for this reason, the people are no longer with us. Again, the tactility of absence, the absence of the murdered enfolds us in a cry for remembrance and recognition.

Underwriting the trauma and truth that we experience in the midst of this installation is Boltanski's engagement with the archive. In *El Caso* the exhibition of the portrait photographs and the not visible photographs of absent and remained corpses communicates the filing away of information as is the practice of police in murder investigations.[7] Such police archives contain material to which we, the public, ordinarily have no access. Thus, through the complex interaction of portraits we cannot see clearly, lights, leads, tin boxes and freshly cleaned sheets, Boltanski offers us an imaginative access that potentially undoes the rationalization of institutional archives such as the police archives from which he claims the images were taken.

Indeed, our response undoes the rationale of the archive per se. For the modernist archive is, as Sekula explains, an instrumentalization of the image, a place where images are categorized, indexed, made into objects whose unpredictability and potential to disturb have been stymied.

When Boltanski places such once-archived images and objects in a space that invites unbounded reflection, inquiry and questioning, he sets them free, offering them up for revivification thanks to their generation of visitors' memories.

We may be blind to what the authorities hide, and the press sensationalizes, but Boltanski invites us to animate and envision, to create stories in the place of our blindness. In turn, our insights become the ground for our responsibility to remember those who have been murdered.

The images are made public just for us: the police, the newspaper, the morticians, even Boltanski the artist, have left the installation by the time we arrive at *El Caso*. In their absence we step into an environment that surrounds us with, makes us responsible for a past, for injustice, for murder, and its motives. Inside this space we are given responsibility for the memory of every case of murder that ever was, not simply those represented in the images and objects of *El Caso*.

Increasingly in recent years Boltanski has turned his energy to works in which there are no photographs. Rooms full of clothes, telephone books, sounds, most notably of his own heartbeat are accumulated, stacked, deposited under the guise of preservation. In works such as *Réserve du Musée des Enfants* (1989), *Les Abonné du Téléphone* (2002), *Les Archives du Coeur* (2010), Boltanski echoes the tendency of museums and other institutions in their practices of preservation and archiving. Like the figures and faces in the *Monuments* series, like the identities of those to whom the clothes belonged, whose names are in the now arcane telephone book, the human is anonymous, absent. As if in a repetition of institutional practices that incarcerate, we are no longer shown what it is we are looking at. Rather, what we are seeing is left up to our imagination. The bodies that once gave shape to the clothes, the names that fill the pages of the telephone books, the secrets that are forever locked inside boxes, have either been erased or removed from our inquiring eye. And yet, even though Boltanski withholds all images and objects that might lead to identification, we sit comfortably in our blindness, in the prohibition to look. Because without seeing we are able to access a knowledge much more immense than could have been contained in the knowledge of a name, an object, a single image.

In one last example: as visitors entered *Personnes* Boltanski's intallation at the Grand Palais in winter 2010, they were bombarded by the deafening noise of what could have been an industrial site in full swing, or the engine room of an old train. Mid-winter cold and darkness, loud and repetitious noises, harsh lighting, plunged visitors into the memory of what others suffered in the unbearable experience of being on the train to Auschwitz. Each step further into the heart of the Grand Palais, was like a step further down the ladder into the pit of Dante's *Inferno*.

On entering the Grand Palais, a wall of rusting biscuit tins, each with a number suggesting a secret inside, formed an obstacle to the nave. Visitors were forced to walk around the wall, along it, to navigate it in an attempt to gain entry into the nave proper. Inside the formidable space of the nave there was a series of sixty nine rectangular spaces, each covered in used clothes, each rectangle demarcated by four steel posts. Harsh fluorescent lights were strung up diagonally and vertically between the posts: these were the only light source in the Grand Palais. It was not only dark inside, but by the time visitors had walked around the wall of biscuit tins, the cold was palpable. Boltanski had the central heating turned off to accentuate the alienating darkness of his installation.

The deafening, industrial noise was apparently Boltanski's heart beat blaring from speakers attached to the steel posts. The noise was so loud, alienating because of its "technologization," that immediately, the urge to escape the Grand Palais overwhelmed the visitor. Indeed, the sound was everything we imagine people's heartbeats not to be. Just like the portrait photos were everything we knew a portrait is not. The sound of Boltanski's heartbeat was as absent as the photographed individuals of earlier works. All traces of the human had become cold, mechanical, de-individualized. On touching a steel post, the beat of the heart could be felt ricocheting down the post. But unlike the experience of most exhibitions or indeed, how we might imagine the experience of touching another person's heart beat, there was no desire to hold onto this moment, no sense of intimacy with a beating heart; the steel post was so cold that the instinctive response was to retract the hand immediately and put it back in a glove.

Behind the fields of clothes was another huge pile of clothes that the accompanying program likened to Böcklin's *Island of Death* (1883). But unlike Böcklin's painting, there was no light breaking through into Boltanski's *mise-en-scène*. It was impossible to look at this pile of clothes without thinking of the piles of confiscated belongings in images we know only too well of the extermination camps. Above the mountainous pile of clothes, an overhead crane mechanically grabbed clothes with its hoist, raised them and promptly dropped them back onto the pile. The mechanical motion of the crane, the shapeless clothes, the sense of endless repetition, with the harsh thud of the heartbeat in the background, plunged us into a world of death, loss, the absence of hope. There was no humanity in this installation, and visitors were reminded of their complete powerlessness in the face of machines, whether of the material kind or of the totalitarian political variation. If there were memories in the threads of these clothes (as Boltanski claims there was) they were so ignored by the crane that lifted and dumped them dramatically at regular intervals, so drowned out by the deafening heart beats, that we never even come close to perceiving or connecting to them.[8]

And so, in the ironically titled *Personnes* (French for both "people" and "nobody") we are lured into an exhibition space, an archival emptiness, in which there is very little to see. The sonic environment, the harsh lighting, and the ice-cold temperature of the space push us to search for their reason. And in this search, we are triggered to remember; we remember and in so doing become witnesses to events we never experienced. This corporeal involvement in the space of the archive – often through sound, but also through straining to look at what we will never see – creates the space to remember events from which we were absent.

Boltanski's insistence on the visual inaccessibility, the erasure, or the emptying out of the archival object and image is a radical gesture that confronts the privilege of the photograph, and in particular the police photograph, to see. If the photograph as document or trace of a victim of a crime is used by authorities, by the police, or by the Nazis, for example, then they use it to contain the prisoner, the "criminal," the one deemed a miscreant. In this sense Boltanski's re-archiving of images and objects that either deny their visual dimensions, or the viewer's visual perception, confront institutional archives as they have been theorized by critics such as Sekula in *The Body and the Archive*. For the latter are archives that seek to control, manipulate, incarcerate memory, archives that are always linked to imprisonment and death. Boltanski's refusal of the viewer's look and power of sight is a gesture that empowers the one who is not pictured, or present, at the installation: the victim. Because in our inability to see, we are forced to remember the one who is no longer able to be looked at because she is dead. This empowerment thus offers a radical challenge to the processes of systematization, incarceration and destruction that take place in institutions such as the Nazi concentration camps, police custody, or State incarceration, worlds in which the body and soul no longer matter.

To frame the struggle in Boltanski's work otherwise, Paul Virilio decries the "instrumental tentacles" that have violated the depths of the human soul, mirrored as it is by modern art's aesthetic focus on the destruction of the body, and thus, its reflection of the capitulation of art and life to science. When the human heart is turned into an industrial echo, felt on cold rusty steel, when we are no longer given the opportunity to see and to think. For Virilio, a survivor, the Nazis have won. Boltanski's work might thus be seen as an alternative solution to the state of affairs remarked on by Virilio. At the end of *Personnes*, before leaving the Grand Palais, visitors are invited to record their heartbeat for storing in an archive on the Japanese island of Teshima. Much like DNA might once have been understood as the substance of an individual's identity, for Boltanksi, the sound of the heart is the stamp of individuality. This gesture of recording and subsequently archiving for a future ensures our longevity. Together with our experience of the empty archive inside the Grand Palais, the protection of our heartbeat is Boltanski's solution to Virilio's hell. In our experience of the space of the installation as empty archive, we are, once again, brought back to thinking in time, remembering with a blurred vision that re-integrates the human, the soul back into the pre-eminence of life and art.[9]

Notes

[1] Marianne Hirsch conceives of post-memory as "the relationship of the second generation to powerful, often traumatic, experiences that preceded their births but that were nevertheless transmitted to them so deeply as to seem to constitute memories in their own right." Marianne Hirsch, "The Generation of Postmemory," in *Poetics Today*, vol. 29, no. 1, Spring 2008, p. 103.

[2] See, for example, the catalogue accompanying the exhibition in Germany: Ralf Beil (ed.), *Christian Boltanski*, Hatje Cantz, Berlin 2007. See also, Rebecca Caines, "Christian Boltanski: representation and the performance of memory," in *Afterimage*, vol. 32, no. 1, July-August 2004, pp. 4-5.

[3] The notion of Boltanski's installations as "altars" is common to the Boltanski literature. He even titles his works as altars. See, for example, Christian Boltanski, *Altar to the Chases High School*, 1987.

[4] For more on the archival documentation of all prisoners at Auschwitz in a related article, see Frances Guerin, "Film as an Archive for Photography: *The Portraitist* as a Witness to the Holocaust," in *Screening the Past*, no. 29, November 2010, http://www.latrobe.edu.au/screeningthepast/29/film-archive-photography-portraitist-witness-holocaust.html.

[5] Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, Hill & Wang, New York 1980. Barthes maintains throughout these reflections, and bases his conception of photography on the fact that the photograph is forever linked to the identity of the person photographed, unlike a painting which can be the construct of the artist.

[6] The hidden photographs have, in turn, been collected into an artist's book of limited edition. Christian Boltanski, *El Caso*, Centro De Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid 1988.

[7] Here I am drawing on the work of Allan Sekula who discusses the use of the photograph for police and state archives in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Sekula claims these archives were in themselves a form of control. Allan Sekula, "The Body and the Archive," in *October*, no. 39, Winter 1986, pp. 3-64.

[8] Boltanski makes this claim in the Interview that accompanied the flyer given out at the exhibition.

[9] Paul Virilio, *Art and Fear*, Continuum, London 2003.

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Traces et indices de l'histoire du décors au cinéma : des archives « muettes »

L'étude approfondie d'un fonds inédit concernant tel ou tel autre décorateur de cinéma ne peut se limiter à l'analyse des documents présents dans le fonds en question. Ces documents bruts mis à disposition du spécialiste (étudiant, chercheur, praticien) sont loin d'être explicites. L'expérience montre que bien souvent « On n'y voit rien » (Daniel Arasse, 2000) d'autrefois qu'on y voit mais on n'y comprend rien ou alors on y voit trop bien mais on ne sait pas comment le traduire. En effet, l'observateur fait le plus souvent face à des pièces totalement opaques, insignifiantes et loin de la réalisation d'une film : un croquis sans ni date ni titre, une lettre manuscrite sans destinataire, une liste de courses, une photographie anonyme, un reçu de frais à l'étranger, une phrase griffonnée sur le dos d'un menu, une carte postale, etc. Pourtant, même des pièces si peu « parlantes » peuvent éclairer sur les configurations sociales et les orientations esthétiques de leur auteur. De fait, l'analyse d'un fonds inédit requiert une méthode particulière qui n'aurait rien à envier à une enquête de Sherlock Holmes par laquelle l'observateur ne parviendrait à ses conclusions qu'à travers la recherche du moindre élément documentaire. La figure qui s'apparente le mieux à cette prospection est celle du tapis où le dessin ne prend forme qu'au fur et à mesure du croisement des fils en tous sens. Si au début « on n'y voit rien », c'est par la persévérance et le *plaisir* – le « *serio ludere* » – d'y voir plus qu'en définitive quelque chose de la trame du dessin apparaît. Carlo Ginzburg a montré l'importance d'une attitude mettant en suspens toute connaissance antérieure du sujet abordé pour mieux atteindre une « vérité ». Pour Ginzburg, le temps de l'histoire est avant tout le temps du *soupçon*, il en fait d'abord une affaire d'observation, de regard porté sur l'objet. Un regard oblique, attentif donc aux éléments qui pourraient sembler d'un premier abord périphériques, que l'on peut atteindre seulement si une « mise au noir » intellectuelle préside au commencement de l'enquête.

Le Flair, le coup d'œil, l'intuition

Carlo Ginzburg nous a appris que par le goût de la quête indiciaire, les détails les plus délaissés, les plus « dépourvus d'importance, voire franchement triviaux et ' bas ', fournissent la clé permettant d'accéder aux productions les plus élevées de l'esprit humain ».[1]

Dans cette démarche le flair, le coup d'œil, l'intuition, peuvent conduire à des résultats marquants. Faire sortir ces documents de l'opacité par leur mise en relation avec d'autres source n'a pas seulement pour effet d'ajouter de nouvelles traces, mais leur étude et déchiffrage permet d'en faire des véritables d'archives. Pour cela, il faut sans doute accéder à l'intelligence de ce que la trace initiale laissait invisible. Comme l'a justement souligné Antoine Prost « pas de question sans document », mais, complémentairement, « pas de document sans question ».[2] L'archive toute faite n'existe pas et l'on peut même se poser la question de savoir si c'est l'archive qui crée le sujet ou le sujet qui crée l'archive. Je m'appuierai ici sur l'exemple du fonds conservé à la Cinémathèque française du décorateur Serge Pimenoff dont la recherche a été effectuée dans le cadre du projet ANR Cinémarchives dirigé par Marc Vernet et pour lequel après deux ans d'investigations je suis en mesure d'en présenter les résultats en termes de méthode et de connaissance du fonds.[3] Je souhaiterais souligner également que cette expérience a permis d'imaginer des nouvelles formes de valorisation : un site Internet de la Cinémathèque française entièrement consacré à ce fonds d'archives ; un court-métrage mettant en relation le travail de Pimenoff avec l'expérience de trois décorateurs : François de Lamothe, Jacques Bufenoir, Jean-Jacques Caziot. Commençons donc par une présentation rapide de Serge Pimenoff, du fonds d'archives et de la méthode employée.

Serge Pimenoff : de Mouscou à Paris

Malgré l'impressionnante filmographie de cinéastes qui ont marqué l'histoire du cinéma français des années 1930-1950, le nom de Serge Pimenoff n'est quasiment jamais évoqué dans la bibliographie de la période. Rares sont donc les éléments qui permettent de retracer sa biographie et ses débuts dans le cinéma. Ainsi, ce n'est qu'en recoupant plusieurs fonds d'archives de la Cinémathèque française (Abel Gance, Bailly et Jean-Paul Le Chanois) avec des archives privées (Georges Artemoff) qu'il a été possible d'établir avec précision, ne serait-ce que ses date et lieu de naissance et la fin de son activité de décorateur du cinéma français.

Serguei Pimenov arrive en France autour des années 1920, tout comme des centaines de milliers d'émigrés russes. Et comme ses compatriotes décorateurs – Lazare Meerson, Andrej Andreiev, entre autres – sa carrière cinématographique ne commencera qu'après sa collaboration à plusieurs projets artistiques de la « colonie russe ». Il participera, notamment avec ses amis Georges Artemoff, Sandro Minervine, Lydia Nicanorova et Semianovsky, à la création de fresques murales, par exemple dans des cafés-concerts parisiens, dont le célèbre « Caveau Caucasien » de Montmartre.

La « grande histoire » a retenu de ce flux d'immigration l'exil artistique et intellectuel de personnalités notables (tout particulièrement, Marc Chagall, Marina Tsvetaeva, Ivan Bounine, Dimitri Méréjkovski, Nina Berberova, Serge de Diaghilev, Natalia Gontcharova, Sonia Delaunay, Serge Poliakoff), celui, laissé dans l'ombre, des anonymes,[4] et encore celui d'un « sous-ensemble » de professionnels qui ont mis leur savoir-faire au service de cinéma et dont la valeur a été honorée par les historiens du cinéma.[5] Les liens personnels et professionnels de Serge Pimenoff avec des artistes de ce sous-ensemble (Nicolas Wilcke, Paul Minine, Victor Touriasky, Alexandre Volkoff, Pierre Schildknecht, etc.) à la tête duquel se trouvait la « colonie russe » de Montreuil, pourraient permettre de situer les débuts de sa carrière au sein de ce groupe constituant « à la fois un centre fixe, un pôle et un lieu de passage »[6] pour tous les techniciens, les metteurs en scène et les producteurs russes.

Cependant, les archives des sociétés de production Albatros ou Ciné-France-Film, par exemple, ne mentionnent pas sa présence dans leurs activités et les génériques des films négligent bien souvent le rôle d'assistant-décorateur. En revanche, la suite de sa carrière comme assistant puis chef-décorateur est corroborée par les archives Pimenoff (carnets et maquettes), par les documents archivés dans d'autres fonds de la Cinémathèque française ou encore grâce aux biographies d'artistes russes. Ainsi, d'après la biographie du peintre Georges Calistratovich Artemoff[7] – qui partagea plusieurs projets de décors et une profonde amitié remontant à leur rencontre à l'Ecole de peinture, de sculpture et d'architecture de Moscou – ils auraient travaillé avec Victor Touriasky en Corse sur le tournage du film *Les Ombres qui passent* d'Alexandre Volkoff (1924) alors que là non plus, le nom de Pimenoff ne figure pas au générique. Après cette première expérience sur *Les Ombres qui passent*, une nouvelle occasion se présente avec un film dont l'ambition esthétique et technique nécessitera la participation de dizaines de professionnels : *Napoléon vu par Abel Gance* (1927). Ce film, on ne l'a pas assez souligné[8] au-delà de sa valeur esthétique et historique incontestable, constituera un formidable brassage où des artistes notoires côtoieront débutants, stagiaires, assistants, chroniqueurs (citons parmi eux : Henry Krauss, Mario Naplas, Viktor Tourjansky, Jean Mitry, Alexander Volkoff, Natole Litvak, etc.).

Les techniciens russes ont tout particulièrement une place d'honneur puisqu'en choisissant les studios de Billancourt, Abel Gance « avait hérité de la plupart de la ' famille ' russe ».[9]

Pour les décors, Serge Pimenoff travaillera avec Alexandre Benois (décorateur des Ballets russes de Diaghilev, illustrateur et historien d'art), Alexandre Lochakoff, Georges Jacouty, Vladimir Meinhardt (formés à l'Albatros) – et surtout Pierre Schildknecht, chef-décorateur du film, qu'il retrouvera dans *L'Âge d'or* de Luis Buñuel (1930) et *Les Bateliers de la Volga* (1935) de Wladimir Strijewsky. Dans les années 1930 sa carrière s'envole : il signe les décors de 34 films, parmi lesquels *Les Yeux Noirs* (1935) de Victor Touriansky, *Mayerling* (1936) d'Anatole Litvak, en collaboration avec un autre célèbre décorateur, André Andrejew. La filmographie de Pimenoff ne compte pas moins de 71 titres, et son expérience lui a permis de transmettre son style à d'autres décorateurs français, parmi lesquels Max Douy, François de Lamothe, Pierre Duquesne.

L'Esthétique Pimenoff à travers le fonds d'archives

Dans cette période où l'esthétique des studios est prépondérante, Serge Pimenoff met ses qualités d'architecte au service de la réalisation d'un décor réaliste et poétique. Et affirme à ce propos : « Nous pourrions dire que le champ d'imagination pour un décorateur de film est assez limité. Dans un studio il est toujours question d'un décor réaliste, naturel ou se référant à la réalité. Il est tout fait hors de question d'avoir une vision intellectuelle du décor comme cela est possible au théâtre ».[10] Pimenoff détourne les contraintes imposées par les espaces étroits des studios par l'utilisation des trucages – notamment la maquette « plastique » construite en relief et filmée avec le procédé par caches mis au point par Nicolas Wilcke et Paul Minine en 1924 et en 1931[11] – et par le biais de recherches iconographiques très fournies pour aboutir à une sélection minutieuse des éléments les plus symboliques pour reconstituer une époque, une idée, une atmosphère. Ce style marque le début de sa collaboration avec les cinéastes Anatole Litvak, Victor Touriansky, Pierre Chenal, Julien Duvivier, Marcel L'Herbier, Jacques De Baroncelli, Auguste Genina puis, dans les années 1940-1950, avec Jean Delannoy, Jean-Paul Le Chanois, Henri Decoin, Robert Hossein, Henri Calef et enfin avec Helmut Käutner pour *Sans tambour ni trompette / Une fleur au fusil* (*Die gans von Sedan*, 1959), son dernier film.

Le fonds d'archives Pimenoff permet de retracer sa méthode et son style conséquent. En effet, avant même de concevoir une maquette et après la lecture du scénario du film, Serge Pimenoff faisait de longues recherches iconographiques dont témoigne le fonds d'archives.

Dix-neuf carnets et 845 maquettes permettent de retracer ses recherches. Les carnets se présentent sous la forme de cahiers d'environ une centaine de pages, sur lesquels Serge Pimenoff a collé croquis, cartes postales, plans, coupures de presse, notes manuscrites, des gravures, etc. et surtout des photographies, prises par lui-même ou provenant de fonds d'archives. Les carnets comportent des documents exceptionnels susceptibles d'intéresser plusieurs axes et domaines de recherche : d'une manière générale, les recherches sur l'histoire du cinéma français portant sur la période 1920-1950 découvriront dans ce fonds des archives inédites ; tout particulièrement, les études sur l'apport esthétique des Russes dans la conception des décors du cinéma français, trouveront ici un fonds incontournable ; ce fonds donne accès à toute investigation autour du métier de décorateur à une époque donnée : les étapes, les sources d'inspiration, les contraintes, les relations avec le reste de l'équipe, l'étude historique et esthétique de l'espace au cinéma à travers l'étude des matériaux en amont (le travail de repérage et de construction) et en aval (les films), etc., toutes ces questions sont analysables à partir des pièces qui composent ce fonds. Enfin, l'histoire du spectacle peut être également concernée par ce fonds grâce à deux carnets entièrement consacrés, l'un à la Foire de Vincennes dans les années 1950, l'autre au cirque. Toutefois, hormis ces axes, la sélection d'images hautement symboliques opérée par Serge Pimenoff en vue des décors destinés à un film et répondant à un imaginaire collectif constitue une précieuse source pour les recherches iconographiques et anthropologiques. Ce fonds tout à fait exceptionnel est aujourd'hui sauvegardé, intact et enfin accessible aux chercheurs, avant tout grâce à Pimenoff lui-même.

En effet, compte tenu des dates très proches entre la mort de Serge Pimenoff – le 21 mai 1960 – et l'entrée de la collection à la Cinémathèque française – le 6 avril 1961 –, on peut supposer que le classement de la collection et son achat par la Cinémathèque française avaient été établis bien avant même la disparition du décorateur. Les pièces qui composent la documentation ont été soigneusement collées et annotées dans des carnets par Pimenoff lui-même, de même que les annotations sur les maquettes sont de son initiative. En fin de carrière, Serge Pimenoff a été conscient de la valeur de son travail et de l'intérêt qu'on pourrait y porter par la suite. Afin d'illustrer ses recherches iconographiques et son style je ne prendrai ici qu'un seul exemple : ses décors pour le film *Mademoiselle Docteur* de Georg Wilhelm Pabst.

Le Style Pimenoff à l'épreuve de la critique

Mademoiselle Docteur sort en France en 1937, puis en 1940 il est interdit pour « incitation à la haine contre l'Allemagne », enfin 1947 le producteur Romain Pinès procède à un nouveau montage où des coupes sont opérées afin de « pacifier les spectateurs furieux de voir remis en circulation un film dans lequel les Allemands étaient représentés de façon avantageuse ».[12]

Cette version courte obtient alors un visa d'exploitation et le film peut donc être à nouveau distribué en France, mais aussi aux Etats-Unis et dans d'autres pays européens, tel l'Italie, mais sous un nouveau titre : *Salonique, nid d'Espions.*[13] La renaissance de ce film sera appréciée par le public, mais la critique est partagée : pour certains le scénario est jugé trop romanesque, surchargé et mal ficelé indigne du grand réalisateur de *Loulou* ; d'autres n'hésiteront pas à écrire qu'avec ce film, ils ont retrouvé : « le grand bonhomme du cinéma dont on s'était un peu trop hâté de prononcer l'oraison funèbre ».[14] Bien plus tard, en 1965, la critique de Freddy Buache fait encore état de cette dichotomie : il juge à la fois le film comme un « mélo particulièrement surchargé » et souligne en même temps que « quelques morceaux choisis peuvent être classés parmi les meilleures réussites plastiques de bon artisanat du cinéma français d'avant-guerre ».[15] Après les années 1950, le film n'est plus que rarement programmé dans les circuits des ciné-clubs jusqu'à sa réédition en 1981. Plusieurs revues spécialisées donneront une place à cet événement au travers de chroniques, mais là-encore, parfois les avis seront partagés. Enfin il faut retenir la passionnante critique de Barthelemy Amengual qui resitue le film dans la carrière de Pabst – au moment de l'exil lorsqu'il a du s'accommoder aux règles du cinéma français, à ce titre il écrit « *Salonique, nid d'espions* doit avant tout être perçu comme un [excellent] film français » – et il en souligne les caractéristiques qui lui permettent d'affirmer que « Pabst a apporté à sa mise en scène beaucoup plus de science et de talent qu'on ne veut bien dire ». En témoignage, il cite plusieurs séquences du film avec leurs éléments de décors : la maison des rendez-vous « avec ses miroirs qui divisent, rassemblent, redoublent, analysent, ses escaliers lourds de promesses, ses corridors bouchés de brumes phosphorescentes, ses tentures gonflées par l'angoisse [...] ».[16] Visiblement, Barthelemy Amengual a saisi toute l'importance de choix formels qui s'accordent bien peu à un film conventionnel. Classé trop rapidement dans la catégorie nébuleuse de « films d'espionnage » – mêlant réel et fiction, aux limites du film de guerre, policier, politique, mélodramatique et côtoyant aussi bien le cinéma d'auteur que la série B et la superproduction – *Salonique, nid d'Espions* synthétise parfaitement tous les clivages de ce genre : sous le fonds de la Première Guerre mondiale, le film s'inspire de l'histoire réelle d'une redoutable espionne allemande, Anne-Marie Lesser, dont la légende a attribué le pseudonyme de Mlle Doktor. Dans le film, l'espionne (Dita Parlo) est envoyée sous une fausse identité – une celle d'une journaliste américaine – à Salonique pour obtenir des renseignements entre les alliés et la Bulgarie. Sa rencontre avec un officier français (Pierre Fresnay) modifie ses plans : dévoilée, elle perd le contrôle de sa voiture lors d'une course poursuite par les services secrets français et disparaît dans les flammes. Ce résumé ne donne bien sûr qu'une infime idée d'un scénario riche en rebondissement (assuré par Irma Von Cube, Léo Birinski et Herman J. Mankiewicz), aux dialogues de Jacques Natanson et pour lequel Pabst avait pu réunir l'un des plus imposants génériques du cinéma français des années 1930 : Dita Parlo, Viviane Romance, Charles Dullin, Louis Jouvet, Pierre Fresnay, Pierre Blanchar, Roger Karl, Jean-Louis Barrault, Gaston Modot, etc. En effet, derrière l'intrigue d'espionnage, le film transpose avant tout à l'écran un *no man's land* : Salonique, une ville réputée être au cœur du réseau d'espionnage international. Les images – signées par le célèbre chef-opérateur Eugen Schüfftan – suggèrent par leur esthétique l'impossibilité de saisir profondément les enjeux politiques et militaires qui opposent ou allient conjoncturellement plusieurs pays (l'Allemagne, la Grèce, la Serbie, la Bulgarie, la Romanie, l'Albanie, la France, l'Italie, la Russie, le Royaume-Uni). Pabst accorde alors « moins d'importance au développement continu de l'action ou à l'évolution psychologique des personnages qu'au traitement plastique de certaines scènes privilégiées. Un décor, un costume, une attitude de comédien et le dosage de la lumière créent l'atmosphère en nouant le drame ».[17]

Compte tenu de ce parti pris du cinéaste, le travail du décorateur Pimenoff est donc particulièrement recherché pour ce film : ses décors doivent à la fois évoquer des événements historiques précis et en même créer un *effet* de dépassement de ces mêmes événements par des « décors d'atmosphère ». Le carnet ALB 228 présente les pièces qui ont servi à constituer la documentation historique : des photographies d'archives, d'autres tirées de la presse des années 1915-1917, ainsi que des cartes postales représentant la ville de Salonique en 1917.

Les lieux principaux de la ville sont ainsi mis en évidence : la place du marché, les souks et les rues marchandes, les bains turcs, les églises, les bâtiments institutionnels comme les ambassades de France et des Etats-Unis, le cercle des officiers, les foyers des soldats. Tous ces lieux et bien d'autres seront parfaitement reconstitués en studios, parfois à l'identique des photographies d'archives (comme le cercle des officies) et pourtant, l'effet à l'écran en est bien moins réaliste. Pimenoff a ajouté aux décors qui s'inspirent d'éléments réels, des motifs marquants (des arcades, des miroirs, des escaliers lourds, des corridors, des tentures, si bien repérés par Barthelemy Amengual) mis en évidence afin de leur donner une ampleur inhabituelle par rapport au reste du décor traité plus sobrement. Comme on peut l'observer à travers les maquettes l'espace ainsi créé est troublant. A l'écran, c'est tout le climat qui devient morbide et étouffant sous la touche d'Eugen Scüfftan en maître souverain des éclairages.

Au terme de ces recherches menées sur le fonds d'archives d'un décorateur, une fameuse affirmation de Carlo Ginzburg m'a semblé s'adapter parfaitement à ce travail. L'historien, parvient à la conclusion que les sciences humaines sont devant un dilemme désagréable : « ou assumer un statut scientifique faible pour arriver à des résultats marquants, ou assumer un statut scientifique fort pour arriver à des résultats négligeables »[18] – un statut scientifique faible qui était le mien lorsque j'ai commencé à étudier le fonds d'archives du décorateur de cinéma de Serge Pimenoff. Il s'agissait tout d'abord d'étudier un terrain qui ne m'était pas familier (le décor de cinéma) ainsi qu'un fonds qui se présentait comme un ensemble d'énigmes totalement inédit (j'ai ouvert les boîtes 50 ans après leur acquisition) : aucun inventaire, des documents hétérogènes impliquant des connaissances multiples et variées (croquis, maquettes, correspondance, photographies, estampes, etc.), l'auteur de ces documents : un émérite inconnu (pas une seule ligne écrite sur lui). Or, si ces éléments ont constitué un obstacle – j'ai douté plusieurs fois de la possibilité de parvenir à des résultats – ils ont eux-mêmes engendré à la fois ma curiosité et la nécessité d'une enquête oblique par la recherche du moindre indice dans ce fonds ou d'autres conservés à la Cinémathèque française. Ce n'est après le travail d'inventaire et analyse des pièces que la valorisation scientifique du fonds a été possible grâce à laquelle ces archives muettes sont sorties de l'oubli et une nouvelle histoire des décors du cinéma a pu commencer. Une histoire qui commence du bas, de ceux qui n'ont pas la parole dans les grandes histoires : les artistes et techniciens. Les histoires du décor de cinéma ne retiennent que les noms des grands chefs décorateurs : le stagiaire, l'aide, l'assistant, demeurent toujours dans l'ombre. Ces années de formation et collaborations sont pourtant très significatives quant aux formes et méthodes employées par le futur chef-décorateur. Le fonds d'archives du décorateur Serge Pimenoff démontre l'importance de ce long parcours d'initiation. C'est film après film, auprès d'un maître, que le débutant apprend les techniques et les méthodes du métier jusqu'à ce qu'à son tour il gagne le titre de chef décorateur et affirme son propre style. Entre les deux moments, plusieurs films – parfois des dizaines pour ceux pour qui le grand saut n'est jamais arrivé parfois par choix, comme pour le talentueux Jacques Brizzio, sont le résultat de cette collaboration trop souvent négligée par les génériques de films, mais aussi par les critiques et historiens. Tout fonds d'archives consacré à un décorateur peut nous renseigner sur l'évolution de ce métier et participer ainsi à une histoire du décor au cinéma. Les méthodes et les matériaux employés, les sources d'inspiration et les styles sont à la fois singuliers – propres à chaque décorateur – et en même temps traces d'une continuité dont le savoir-faire s'est transmis de génération en génération. Travail d'équipe par excellence, avec un atelier réunissant des menuisiers, des artistes-peintres, des « mouleurs », les staffeurs, le régisseur, l'ensemblier et son assistant etc., le métier de décorateur implique un long parcours d'initiation. Il encore temps pour écrire une nouvelle histoire des décors du cinéma : celle qui commence par la petite porte, réservée aux oubliés.

Notes

[1] Carlo Ginzburg, *Mythes, emblèmes, traces ; morphologie et histoire*, (1986), Paris 1989, p. 146.

[2] Antoine Prost, *Douze leçons sur l'histoire*, Seuil, Paris 1996, pp. 80-81.

[3] Ces résultats sont accessibles sur le site Internet « Serge Pimenoff. Les techniques du décor de cinéma », réalisée par moi-même avec le concours de la Cinémathèque française et de Cinémarchives.

[4] Voir : Michelle Beyssac, *La Vie culturelle de l'émigration russe en France : Chronique (1920-1930)*, PUF, Paris 1971 ; Catherine Gousseff, *Exil russe, 1920-1939. La Fabrique du réfugié apatride*, CNRS Editions, Paris 2008.

[5] Voir à ce sujet : l'exposition « Albatros, l'école russe de Montreuil » (Ass. Premier siècle, Cinémathèque française) et sa rétrospective de films avait déjà mis en lumière l'importance de cette expérience cinématographique (1995) ; l'exposition virtuelle proposée par la Cinémathèque française *Le Cinéma russe en exil : l'aventure des films Albatros* (2010) ; le documentaire *L'Albatros, débout malgré la tempête*, J'arôme Diamant-Berger et Jean-Marie Boulet, 2010 ; François Albera, *Albatros, des Russes à Paris 1919-1929*, cit. ; Lenny Borget, « From Moscow to Montreuil : Russian Emigrés in Paris, 1920-1929 », dans *Griffithiana*, n° 35-36, octobre 1985; Kristin Thompson, « The Ermolieff Group in Paris : Exile, Impressionism, Internationalism », dans *Griffithiana*, n° 35-36, octobre 1985.

[6] François Albera, « Parmi les émigrés russes du cinéma français », dans *Diasporas, histoire et société*, n° 4, Presses Universitaires Du Mirail, 2004, p. 83.

[7] Nicole Zimermann, Jean-Louis Auge, *Artemoff, le dernier centaure*, Privat, Toulouse 2009.

[8] Rachid Inguirov, « Autour de Napoléon : l'emprunt russe », dans *1895*, n° 31, 2000, pp. 213-238.

[9] Kevin Brownlow, *Abel Gance's Classic Film*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York 1983, p. 52.

[10] Colin Crisp, *The Classic French Cinema 1930-1960*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington-Indianapolis 1993, p. 369.

[11] Le brevet n° 588.560 « Procédé de prises de vues cinématographique » du 12 mai 1925 préconise des prises de vue où la partie inférieure des décors est construite en vraie grandeur, la partie supérieure étant formée d'une maquette de petites dimensions. Ces deux émigrés russes ont contribué à plus de 600 de films produits par les sociétés Albatros, Ciné-France-Film, Les Films Abel Gance, La Continental, etc. Serge Pimenoff a recours à leurs procédés, notamment pour les décors de *Nuits de princes* (M. L'Herbier, 1929), *L'Aiglon* (V. Tourjansky, 1931), *Un carnet de bal* (J. Duvivier, 1937) et bien d'autres.

[12] Pour plus de détails sur le parcours paradoxal de ce film jugé d'abord anti-allemand et ensuite au contraire pro-allemand, voir l'article très fourni d'Eric Le Roy, « Mademoiselle Docteur et la censure française d'après-guerre », Leonardo Quaresima, Alessandra Raengo, Laura Vichi (sous la dir. de), *I limiti della rappresentazione*, Forum, Udine 2000, pp. 413-419.

[13] *Salonique, nid d'espions* : ce nouveau titre permettait par ailleurs, de ne pas confondre le film de Pabst avec la version anglaise d'également 1937 signée par Edmond T. Gréville (avec Dita Parlo dans le rôle et Erich von Stroheim dans celui du colonel Mathesius Simonis) et sortie sous le titre de *Mademoiselle Docteur.*

[14] Nino Frank, *Pour vous*, n° 439, 15 avril 1937, p. 16.

[15] Freddy Buache, « G.W. Pabst », dans *Premier Plan*, n° 39, novembre 1965, p. 88.

[16] Barthélemy Amengual, « Sur quatre films de Pabst », dans *Jeune Cinéma*, n° 135, juin 1981, pp. 1-6.

[17] Freddy Buache, « G.W. Pabst », cit.

[18] Carlo Ginzburg, *Mythes, emblèmes, traces ; morphologie et histoire*, cit., p. 149.

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Reactivating Indexicality in the Urban Archive

In the age of Computer-Generated Imagery (CGI) and YouTube, moving images of the city are at once more freed from the physical laws that govern their referents and more directly bound to profilmic space. In the first instance, the morphing Parisian architecture of Christopher Nolan's *Inception* (2010) comes to mind. As dream worlds collapse in this science fiction thriller, so, too, does cinema's representational fidelity to the built city. The correspondence of image to referent is revealed, in sequences of crumbling, buckling, and exploding urban surfaces, to be an illusion of indexicality, destabilized by animation's mimicry. In the second case, YouTube presents an archive of non-hierarchical views of place, in which trailers and scenes from big-budget Hollywood productions share screen dimensions and "searchability" with the latest amateur uploads. A search for place – The Brandenburg Gate – indeed yields footage filmed in and around the structure at various times. A mere scroll and a click separate Barack Obama's 2008 pre-presidential speech, whose listeners filled the Straße des 17. Juni between the Victory Column and the Gate, from Ronald Reagan's rhetorical request, in 1987, that Mikhail Gorbachev "tear down this wall."[1] The YouTube search results stage the videos' promise of a camera that was there at the advertized moment in the place's history. In other words, YouTube asks users to believe that Berlin is or was what they see (fig. 60).

As a city of 20th century regime change, physical destruction, and reinvention, Berlin has presented a unique challenge to photographic and cinematographic technologies of recording, preservation, and dissemination. A built city of paradigmatic diachronic encounters, in which the past quite often interrupts or glosses the present in monuments, ruins, and the occasional remaining void,[2] the New Berlin's discontinuities at street level correspond to discrepancies in its archive of audiovisual representations. This paper explores the claim of images on the city and the changing implications of indexicality for mediated urban memories in the digital era. By looking at films not as discrete aesthetic entities, but as collections of geographic and architectural information in interplay within and between works, I would like to foreground cinema's potential as a multi-temporal cartography of the city: an urban "cine-archive."

In her recent study of viewing practices "beyond the multiplex," Barbara Klinger investigates the "replay value" of films among millennial American college students. Reflecting the new opportunities for interactive viewing enabled by video and DVD formats, Klinger's survey results indicate a generational pleasure in the familiarity of films, their use for therapy and nostalgia as well as for the intellectual games of decoding complex plots and memorizing dialogue.[3] Whereas Walter Benjamin's "age of technological reproducibility" saw the loss of an original artwork's authority and aura in the face of mass distribution of its photographic or cinematographic copies and found in cinema a potential perceptual training ground for the modern subject,[4] Klinger's "*re*-viewers" of the late 1990s depart from the dogmatism of the classical cinematic apparatus. Their training is in the control and selection of images to view, the manipulation and individualization of the viewing practice, the performance of preference and desire. The shift in these two moments of image access and consumption is important for Berlin's "cine-archive," where cinema's initial potential for record-keeping aligns with ever new modes of mediated return.

Benjamin suggests that devaluation of an original artwork's unique "here and now" through the circulation of its reproduction can also apply to "a landscape moving past the spectator in a film." Curiously, he then goes on to dismiss this comparison by claiming that reproducibility "touches on" a work of art's "authenticity," which is "more vulnerable than that of any natural object." What the reproduction and its mobility destroy is the original artwork's relation to "physical duration" and "historical testimony." The "authentic" work bears the marks of time, a gradual corruption that ceases in the early twentieth century's promise of celluloid eternity. At the same time, the mass dissemination of the artwork's copies transports the work to new situations and "actualizes that which is reproduced" in any number of locations and receptive surroundings.[5]

I want to pause on these two ideas: that reproducibility does not devalue landscapes and natural objects to the same extent as it does original artworks; and that the reproduction "actualizes" the original in a new context. As early travel films demonstrate, cinema brought views of the world to spectators who could not always, for various socioeconomic and logistical reasons, visit these sights themselves. While natural landscapes – seasides, mountains, and fields – might have suggested permanence, urban views presented street scenes and cities-in-progress, e.g. the construction of Manhattan's skyscrapers.[6] These "actualized" cities that cinematographic technology recorded and made available to distant spectators nonetheless originated from a *profilmic* space, a field of view before the camera, a historical intersection of place and time. Devaluation of a unique place was access to its image – the knowledge, through cinema and photography, that a given filmic representation signified a *profilmic* Berlin. Like reproduced original artworks, this "original city" then existed in relation to its reproductions. That is, recording technology preserved a version of the original, a state in its history, but *not* the original in flux, throughout time.

In fact, this discrepancy between the original city and its representation is more complex than that of an original artwork to its copy as urban change accelerates the spatiotemporal disparity between the built city and its cinematic images. Berlin's specific history and evolving physical form have further dramatized this difference. "Origin" takes on a second meaning in Berlin, the capital of the Third Reich, disfigured, by 1945, from bomb raids, street combat, and National Socialist urban planning. When one considers the investment of postwar film theorists such as André Bazin and Siegfried Kracauer in "reality," in cinema's predilection for reproducing the world, it is perhaps no surprise that Walter Ruttmann's *Berlin, Symphony of a Big City* (1927) became film history's *Ur*-representation of Berlin.

An audiovisual experiment at the time of its release, Ruttmann's city symphony incited both awe and critique, also from Kracauer himself.[7] The film's attempt at the construction of urban experience through montage both disseminated a fast-paced, modern city image at home and abroad and drew accusations of falsification. As one critic complained in 1928, "*The film* credits the city with its own essence. *It* is what it claims Berlin to be."[8] In this sense, individual shots functioned less to "document" the city than to contribute elements to a larger structure of motion and commotion, production, transportation, and communication. In the third of five acts depicting a day in the life of the city, this principle of urban kinesthesis reaches its climax. Rapidly intercutting various modes of transportation (automobile, train, carriage, bicycle, and pedestrian) in contrasting diagonal screen directions and superimposing these shots with shots of front-page news, Ruttmann suggests the convergence of traffic and information around the famed intersection at Potsdamer and Leipziger Squares (fig. 61).

In contrast, after the war, the Berlin before the camera was one of skeletal *façades*, mounds of rubble, broken bridges, and treeless parks. The opening of Jost von Morr and John Lionel Bandmann's archival compilation film *Ein Tag im Juli - Berlin 1945* (1975) features several long aerial shots over the city's devastated geographic center as captured by the color film stock of the US Air Force on a documentary mission (fig. 62). The film invites the spectator to believe what he or she sees, to map the representation to its *profilmic* referent. Indeed, the spatiotemporal coordinates of the place – Berlin 1945 – are named at the outset, but this introduces a problem for the "cine-archive." To believe both image registers, that from 1927 and that from 1945, is to acknowledge a rupture in the built city: a "lost original," unrecognizable in the new footage. In 1962, the West German Film Evaluation Commission for Youth and School unanimously approved *Berlin, Symphony of a Big City* for use in schools and film clubs with the rationale that "[the film] conveys the no longer reproducible atmosphere of the 1920s to today's spectators. […] The film doesn't necessarily show the typical Berlin of this period, but rather, more generally, the typical features of a large German city."[9] Not only does the Evaluation Commission now value the film's potential to "document" an irretrievable historical moment; it extends the film's documentary relevance to all German cities. Thus, the copies of the "original city," Germany's original *lost* city, come to stand in not only for Berlin's profilmic space but also for other, non-identical urban locations rendered similar through destruction.

Cinematographic technology, far from depriving the original city of its aura, could provide Weimar Berlin's nearest indexical relative, the moving image, for permanent retrospection. In 1945, André Bazin celebrated, in his famous ontology, cinema as "objectivity in time," a mechanical, objective reproduction of the duration of things or "change mummified."[10] Cinema was the temporal extension of a photograph's claim to the objects before the camera – a physical claim in which the photograph and object "share a common being," which Bazin likens to a fingerprint's trace of a unique finger, or a photo-chemical "impression" much like the molding of a death mask.[11] Comparing the photographic image to the affective immediacy of a "phenomenon in nature," he suggests that "reality" is transferable to its reproductions. Bazin's emphasis on photographic and cinematographic "credibility"[12] is related to Siegfried Kracauer's later insistence, in *Theory of Film*, on cinema's affinity for representing "physical reality." Welding the ability to record duration and change to the spatial, causal, temporal, and hermeneutic endlessness of physical existence, Kracauer singled out the "street" as the privileged location of cinema's "inherent affinity" for "the flow of life."[13]

While both Bazin and Kracauer, in effect, reduce cinema's formal potential to realism, their insistence on cinema's "recording function"[14] is useful for approaching shots or short sequences that reproduce Berlin locations at specific moments in time. At the beginning of *Berlin, Symphony of a Big City*, a train cuts across the countryside, its wheels intercut with the oncoming tracks, electric wires, and phantom rides through an increasingly industrial landscape. This *bravura* locomotive entrance to the city culminates with the engine's arrival at Berlin's Anhalter Bahnhof, the end station of all trains from the South. From the camera's position at the front of the train, the spectator shares, in these final 15 seconds, the point-of-view of the machine itself, gliding through oncoming space. What does this temporal extension of space actually convey? One may note the speed of the engine and camera's advance; the stationary trains on tracks to the left and right of the frame;

the arches and decorative details of the station's brick entryway; the bright light coming through the windows of its dark interior; the moisture on the tracks ahead; the curious hut perched just overhead; a signal pole; a boy, briefly visible, strolling along the platform at the edge of the frame; a sign, barely legible, revealing the location.

Duration, coupled with the motion of the camera, allows the spectator, then and now, an experiential knowledge of Anhalter Bahnhof, circa 1926-1927. Just as Roland Barthes identified the essence of photography as "that-has-been" (the fact that a photographic image presupposes a referent),[15] this cinematic snapshot, a single take from Ruttmann's film, indicates the veracity of both a place and an action. A train arrives at Anhalter Bahnhof (fig. 63). For Barthes, photographic technology enables a form of physical and emotional contact between the body or object in the image and a temporally distant observer. As he puts it, quite like Bazin, "The photograph is literally an emanation of the referent. From a real body which was there, proceed radiations which ultimately touch me, who am here."[16] For Barthes, it is not the image's objective representation that defines photography, but recording technology's relation to loss, particularly to the implied death of its human subjects. In the case of Berlin's filmographic "original city," its mythologized Weimar incarnation, photographs and film footage bear witness not only to past architectures, but also to their eventual absence as in the scene from Wim Wenders's *Wings of Desire* (1987) in which Peter Falk, playing himself, wanders through the dirt-filled expanse of a former train yard.

As Falk traverses the void, the camera pans to reveal all that remains of Anhalter Bahnhof, the remnants of its entryway. Falk turns away from the camera and pauses for a moment, his gaze directed at the ruin in the distance (fig. 64). With his position thus aligned with that of Ruttmann's engine, he muses in voice over, "This must be the station they told me about. The one with the funny name." Moving frame left, he continues, "Not the station where the trains stopped, but the station where the stations stopped." As in the film's Potsdamer Platz sequence, when an old man (played by Curt Bois) wanders through the grassy expanse of the once vibrant square, Falk must narrate the place's invisible history. It is my provocation to place a scene from *Wings of Desire* in dialectical relation to a shot from *Berlin, Symphony of a Big City*, but it is Wenders's provocation to withhold the archival images that haunt collective visual and spatial memories of the station. Cinema's indexical promise – that the city, as recorded, really *was* there in duration – invites reflection as one catalogue of images comments on the other. The medium's propensity for repetition, for "making *re*-visible," delivers urban nostalgia's impossible homecoming. On one hand, access to moving image media guarantees a return to a view or spatial position once recorded. On the other, the filmic image is merely the fingerprint, not the finger.

Today Ruttmann's film demonstrates what I call a "new aura of discrepancy," a triangulation of conflicting spatial information between older and newer recordings and the built city. Berlin's filmic "original city" has become something of a "prosthetic memory" in Alison Landsberg's formulation: a non-organic, mediated, and publicly circulating memory with affective, experiential potential.[17] As the 1990s rehearsed Berlin's history on a grand scale in preparation for the 1999 return of the unified German government, Ruttmann's Berlin could remind citizens of the former East and West of a common cosmopolitan past. The aura of discrepancy and its attendant mechanism of collective urban nostalgia could serve the emerging interests of capital region location politics. Indexicality and its proximity to loss could be mined for selective continuities with the urban future.

At the same time, the emergent digital technologies of the immediate post-unification era offered cartographic solutions to urban loss. In this case, indexicality became a means of mapping filmic images to their pro-filmic referents, of returning spatial duration to its geographic coordinates.

A prototype for this control of urban space may be seen in a prolonged car chase from Franz Cáp's Cold War noir film, *Die Spur führt nach Berlin* (1952) (literally, "the trail leads to Berlin"). As the gangsters flee the West Berlin police, it is clear that postwar reconstruction is also a matter of reconstructing Berlin's filmic spatial relations. Indeed, the criminals' progress along Berlin's West-East axis is charted not only by police orders on the soundtrack, but also through shots of the city map. From Bahnhof Zoo to Wittenbergplatz, from the Victory Column to the Brandenburg Gate, location names correspond to cartographic representations, which, in turn, correspond to filmic images of the built city (fig. 65). At the corners of frames are hints of postwar rubble, bombed-out buildings, and suspiciously empty vistas that retain, however, their place identities. This defamiliarized yet well-known path traces, among aural and cartographic points of recognition, a new spatial order, that of Cold War division. The chase stops, because it must, at the Brandenburg Gate.

With the advent of digital storage of audiovisual media and widespread access to the world wide web, the cartographic organization of filmic images could move away from a dependence on narrative structures. Berlin architecture and design collective *Art + Com*'s 1995 concept for an open web application that archives film sequences cartographically is paradigmatic of this shift. *The Invisible Shape of Things Past* (1995-2007) stores film sequences in the three-dimensional shapes yielded by film frames placed in spatial sequence.[18] By this logic, the arrival of the train in *Berlin, Symphony of a Big City*, would be represented by an extended rectangular block on the interface. Each of these "film objects" would be placed on the city map at the location and time of its recording and could be "activated" through a mouse click, which would then "pull" the user along through virtual space. A "time slider" would allow the user to choose a moment in history.

The demonstration in the company's informational film is limited to the adjacent Potsdamer and Leipziger Squares, one of the locations most visibly altered by Berlin's 20th century history. The project's conceptual conceit reunites images with their moment and place of origin and posits an archive that is also a map of Berlin's visible surfaces (fig. 66). In other words, *The Invisible Shape of Things Past* plays precisely on the dual nature of indexicality – its simultaneous potential to retrieve lost *profilmic* objects and to betray their loss (the mere fingerprint). Due to a morphing function and the spatial contiguity of the city map, *Art + Com*'s archive situates film sequences (themselves only fragments of space in duration) in structures of continuity. This new endlessness rivals, perhaps, in digital form, Kracauer's physical reality. Yet this archive is not constructed for affective potential. The "cine-archive" of the digital era trumps urban nostalgia with a logic of gradual change, a potentially endless reservoir of images and perspectives that cover over loss with sheer quantity of options. Cartographic indexicality, in this form, aims at filling in spatial and temporal voids, but nonetheless these ruptures persist. In its very attempt to reconstruct a totality, *The Invisible Shape of Things Past* inadvertently reveals that there are gaps in the record, lost films, invisible films, and films never made.

At the same time, CGI, which allows filmmakers to manipulate cinema's recording function and assumptions of visible truth, tells us the past as it never was, the present as it isn't, and the future as we might like it to be. The Wachowski siblings' *Speed Racer* (2008), shot in Babelsberg and Berlin, imagines a global space of car-racing action set in a fictional, partially animated future. When the hero finally triumphs, it is in a final stretch before an animated Brandenburg Gate (fig. 67). A nod to film location politics, one sees in this example that even the belief in a fantastical Berlin requires the evocation of *profilmic* space.

Illustrations

60. "YouTube asks users to believe that Berlin is or was what they see."

61. Cap-shot from Walter Ruttmann's *Berlin, Symphony of a Big City* (1927).

62. Jost von Morr and John Lionel Bandmann's archival compilation film *Ein Tag im Juli - Berlin 1945* (1975).

63. A train arrives at Anhalter Bahnhof, cap-shot from Walter Ruttmann's *Berlin, Symphony of a Big City* (1927).

64. Cap-shot from Wim Wenders's *Wings of Desire* (1987).

65. Franz Cáp's Cold War noir film, *Die Spur führt nach Berlin* (1952).

66. *The Invisible Shape of Things Past* (1995-2007), Art + Com's.

67. Wachowski Bros' *Speed Racer* (2008).

Notes

[1] Ronald Reagan spoke before the Brandenburg Gate on June 12, 1987. Barack Obama addressed crowds from the Victory Column on July 24, 2008.

[2] Two studies that contextualize this relation of the built city to its history are: Brian Ladd, *The Ghosts of Berlin: Confronting German History in the Urban Landscape*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1997; and Karen E. Till, *The New Berlin: Memory, Politics, Place*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis 2005.

[3] See in particular Chapter 4, "Once Is Not Enough," in Barbara Klinger, *Beyond the Multiplex*. University of California Press, Berkeley 2006, pp. 125-190.

[4] Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility*, in Howard Eiland, Michael W. Jennings (eds.), *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings*, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge 2003, vol. 4, pp. 251-283.

[5] This argument is laid out in *idem*, p. 254.

[6] See William Uricchio, *Ways of Seeing: The New Vision of Early Nonfiction Film*, in Daan Hertogs, Nico de Klerk (eds.), *Uncharted Territory: Essays on Early Nonfiction Film*, Nederlands Filmmuseum, Amsterdam 1997, p. 129. Related to my notion of "permanence" or a trust in the image as a means of delivering the profilmic is Uricchio's conceptualization of natural views as proto-televisual. For Uricchio, natural scenes, containing very little intrusion of historicity in the frame, not only indicate "a late nineteenth century concern for 'liveness,'" but also act as precursors to notions of "simultaneity" across spatial distance. This is quite different from urban views, replete with historical information and implications of change and development.

[7] For a number of primary texts by Ruttmann during the genesis and reception of the film from 1926-1927, see Jeanpaul Goergen (ed.), *Walter Ruttmann: Eine Dokumentation*, Freunde der Deutschen Kinemathek, Berlin 1987, pp. 78-80. Typical of praise for the film were headlines such as Hans Feld's "The 'Greatest Fundamentally Important Film Event in Years'" or Rudolf Kurtz's observation that "the photographic achievement of this film will carry the reputation of German cinematography throughout the world." See Hans Feld, "Das 'größte grundsächlich wichtige Filmereignis seit Jahren," in *Film-Kurier*, 24 September 1927; and Rudolf Kurtz, "Berlin. Die Sinfonie der Großstadt," in *Lichtbildbühne*, 24 September 1927. Accusations of socially irresponsible montage and literary influences came, famously, from Siegfried Kracauer. See, for example: Siegfried Kracauer, "Wir schaffens," in *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 17 November 1927; Siegfried Kracauer, *Der heutige Film und sein Publikum [Film 1928]* in Inka Mülder-Bach, Siegfried Kracauer, Ingrid Belke (ed.), *Kleine Schriften zum Film*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/Main 2004, vol. 6.2, p. 162; and Siegfried Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler*, [Leonardo Quaresima (ed.)], Princeton University Press, Princeton 2004, rev. ed., pp. 186-187.

[8] Ernst Blass, "'Berlin' und Berlin," in *Berliner Tagesspiegel*, 22 July 1928, in *Mappe 424*, Schiftgut, Deutsche Kinemathek (my italics and translation).

[9] Filmbegutachtungskommission für Jugend und Schule, *Protokoll 19.10.62*, Landesbildstelle 1962, p. 3, in *Mappe 424*, Schriftgut, Deutsche Kinemathek.

[10] André Bazin, *The Ontology of the Photographic Image*, in Hugh Gray (ed.), *What Is Cinema?*, University of California Press, Berkeley 2005, vol. 1, pp. 14-15.

[11] See *idem*, p. 12 and p. 15.

[12] *Idem*, pp. 13-14.

[13] Siegfried Kracauer, *Theory of Film*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1997, pp. 71-72.

[14] The term is specifically used by Kracauer in contrast to cinema's "revealing functions." See *idem*, pp. 41-46.

[15] Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, Richard Howard (trans.), Hill and Wang, New York 1981, p. 77.

[16] *Idem*, p. 80.

[17] See Alison Landsberg, *Prosthetic Memory*, Columbia University Press, New York 2004.

[18] Details on this project are available via the project DVD: *The Invisible Shape of Things Past*, Joachim Sauter (dir.), Art + Com, Berlin 2003.

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Magicking the Archive: Collecting as Sleight of Hand

Archiving the Future

According to Mary Ann Doane,[1] the act of archiving takes on a special meaning in the modern era: the desire to register the instant, the ephemeral, the incomplete, what is happening just now or rather what is *about to* happen. This propensity explodes with the emergence of photo-cinematographic technologies which do not so much invent as bring to the fore an intrinsic feature of the archive, namely what Derrida called its "spectral messianicity,"[2] which is to say that "experience of the promise" that has always been part of the setting aside, conserving and collecting of materials whose meaning can only become clear with the passage of time. Foucault had already gone beyond the narrow notion of the archive as "the sum of all the texts that a culture has conserved as documents of its own past, as a witness of its own sustained identity," when he clearly introduced the dimension of the possible, redefining the archive as "the law of what may be said," as the placing on the agenda of the possible cultural expressions and of future discourses, and hence in a sense of the future itself.[3] Indeed, what is in play in the act of conserving is not just the collection, storing and ordering of the past, but also and perhaps especially, its selection, which is an operation that calls for a more or less risky *gamble* on what comes next. As Mary Anne Doane writes, "the archival process is a wager that stacks the deck: the object, because it is preserved, *will* be interpreted."[4]

Modernity's technologies of reproduction, and particularly the cinema, seem thus less given to the embalming of the past than much theorising, from Matuszewski to Bazin, has supposed. They are aimed at the future and at the flickering moment, which fascinates precisely because it is subtracted from the temporal chain and suspended between past and future, intimately bound up with *chance*. Chronophotographic strips make up a huge archive of random, emphemeral and accidental poses adopted by a body in the course of movement, a catalogue of instants that tend to decompose time into points, whose flow gives time its form. The future, or rather what Steedman calls "the future anterior,"[5] is thus the key time for the modern archive.

What we aim to examine is how the forms of this "passion for the future" show up especially in the act of "archiving through cinema." This act becomes the accumulation of film stills, which are special sorts of images that seem to have inherited the functions of *playing cards*, in the first instance in their tactile qualities: as is well known, the possibility of film was already implicit in the games of sleight of hand, in the widely popular pre-cinematic "flip-" or "flick-" books in which, by passing figures quickly through the hands, they seem to move (fig. 24).

Tom Gunning sees in them two of the founding principles of cinema: the greatest illusionistic power and easy manipulability, which were themselves fundamental for nineteenth-century stage magicians, jugglers and conjurors, who used them as a pack of cards with which to produce magical transformations "by the flick of a wrist." After all, "as the latest conjuring trick," cinema did no more than feed its own language on this tradition of the sleight of hand.[6]

Indeed the still remains an object that is within reach, that can be manipulated by montage, which is to say by "cutting the deck" and setting it alongside other images on a table, whether it be a *moviola*, an electronic cutting desk or a digital timeline. Like a card, also the film still subordinates the representative dimension to the dialectical dimension, inasmuch as its sense becomes clear only within its frame and within a series.

But playing cards stands also for a primordial form of archiving by images, which, in virtue of their being connected from the outset with the spheres of *gambling* and *divination*, are always aimed at the future. According to Caillois, the earliest tribal games of chance were at once (a) a form of visual catalogue of the things in the world, also with an eye to the hunt; (b) a technique of divination and propitiation of the future; and (c) a form of play based on the pleasure of gambling. The two-sided African dice that Caillois cites in his study of games remind us immediately of cards, as three-dimensional objects of which only two sides are put to use; in a single gesture, they combine the act of playing with time and playing with an archive of images; for these objects are incised on one side with the symbols for the virtues and on the other with innumerable different designs that "constitute a kind of visual encyclopaedia"[7] composed of ideograms of plants, the sky, the moon and the stars, representations of everyday objects and mysterious figures in hieratic poses." At each flick of the wrist, the images conserved in this primordial encyclopaedia of cards (halfway between a talisman and a purely conventional sign) were thus played by the hand of fortune, which produced ever-new combinations, divining the future of time and that of the archive itself.

The Archive, the Atlas and Divination

This anthropologically ancient gesture of divining by playing image-cards reappears with its meaning reinforced in one of the tables of Warburg's atlas, in which the pictorial representation of the Muses returns explicitly in the form of playing cards and, specifically, of the tarot (fig. 25).

This is the panel 50-51, to which Warburg gave the title *Handbarmachung*, meaning "making handleable" or "within reach," as if to point to the card deck as a mapping of the world by way of figures or figurines (the earth, the stars, power, fate and so on) which, when they pass from hand to hand over time, change their form and function, and hand down the archive.

For the purposes of understanding the archive and how it comes to be re-codified, there is a crucial difference between the two decks of tarots that Warburg picked on. On the one hand, we have in the centre the version of the tarot that is called "Mantegna's" and that was created in the fifteenth century, when tarot cards made their first appearance in European courts as visual encyclopaedias used only for play and not at all for divination. On the other (at the bottom) we have the Marseille tarot, which was the most widely used in magical practices from the eighteenth century onwards, when the divinatory function of the cards was literally *invented*, transforming a simple deck of figurines into a magical constellation of images for divining the future.

The emblems appearing on the tarots were reinterpreted as the leftover from a primitive magical game of the sort discussed by Caillois, as arcane pictograms or primordial Egyptian hieroglyphics that contained by way of images the destiny of the whole universe in all its infinite temporal combinations. The fascinating story of this passage from the tarot as a mere game to its magical-divinatory role has been set out in part by Michael Dummett.[8] It presents an interesting case of the migration of images within the archive of memory, not least given that the iconographic origin of the tarots is still a mystery and hence these images, insofar as they lack a "beginning," present a radical challenge to the archive understood in the Greek sense of *Arkhe*, or "place of origin." In short, these are strange images, whose origin was constructed only after the fact, and which have been deputed to predict the future, the future anterior. For present purposes, however, it is worth remarking that, in Warburg's panel, they illustrate a crucial passage in the history of the card-image.

On the one hand, the tarots are like a world archived as images and placed within our grasp; on the other, they make up a system or set of magical cards for playing with time, for predicting chances and future combinations. Their divinatory power no longer derives after all from the fixing of the symbols to be interpreted in and of themselves, but from the dialectic generated by their being placed in a series: to give predictive power to the tarots, the reader has to begin with the combinatorial formula that is generated on the table by chance, setting up a past, a present and a future. It is in this way that the "archival" function of the tarots mutates from that of allegories handed down the centuries to that of concentrations of time, of instruments able to visualise its becoming.

The tarot is thus the ancient form of that peculiar variant on the archive that is the atlas, itself ancient and at the same time more radical than its successors, for the "map" produced by the hand of the tarot is ephemeral in being cancelled and regenerated without leaving a trace. Though he does not take the tarots as a model, it is not by chance that Georges Didi-Huberman describes Warburg's atlas as a "field of play with the cards of art history" precisely because, unlike the archive that inevitably precedes it, the atlas

> *is not made for definitively classifying, for exhaustively making an inventory, or for cataloguing once and for all – as in a dictionary […] or an encyclopedia – but instead for gathering segments, or parcelling out the world, while respecting its multiplicity and heterogeneity, and for giving a legibility to the underlying relations.*[9]

With its figurine cards ready to hand and ever-ready to change position, the atlas makes use of images not to collect what has already happened, but to "read the cards" of history's destiny. And, rather than being a archivist-*flâneur* who "stores away past time," he who would lay the tarots out on the table is more of a magician or, to call on a key, but too often forgotten, figure in Benjamin, more of a "gambler," who lives in the moment that is just coming.[10]

It is not improbable that Warburg was alive to the suggestion of the magic cards in thinking of his atlas, if for no other reason than that he lived in a culture imbued with a powerful revival of magic precisely in terms of the card-image, the talisman, but also the "figurine" put in its place (with the hands) within a system of visual analogies. In the visual culture of the *fin de siècle* and of the avant-garde, there erupted a mania for *images-devinette*, such as the Epinal cards[11] and for the divinatory reading of the tarots. This was a source of inspiration for writers as different as Raymond Roussel, Ezra Pound and above all, Thomas Stearns Eliot, in whose *Wasteland* of 1922, the whole memorial archive of Western culture is literally put "within reach" in the form of the "wicked pack" of tarots that the clairvoyant Madame Sosostris handles and uses to divine the montage of times. In this poem, the archive of the past takes on the magical configuration of an atlas made up of fragments that are arranged in accordance with secret analogies and correspondences; and it is no accident that, when Italo Calvino revisited Eliot's tarots in the *Castle of Crossed Destinies* (1973), he set the card game in the castle of Ariosto's famous magus Atlante, conjuror of fortuitous meetings (crossed destinies) and of visual illusions and transformations.

Closer to Warburg, we find the Surrealists taking the tarots as a model for a manipulation of the archive of memory and of time. In the 1930s, André Breton commissioned for the cover of the review *Minotaure* (n. 3-4, 1933) André Derain to draw four images of the Arcana inspired by the Marseille pack, thus taking the tarot cards as a *manifesto* for the review's visual and conceptual project.

Inside this number there are numerous articles on astrology mixed in with the "cards" of psychoanalysis, with discussions of the rituals and forms of primitive art, including *graffiti*, and interventions by Derain commenting on the form and popularity of modern tarots, as well as illustrations that interpret other images as if they were cards. If Warburg "played with the cards of art history," the Surrealists do likewise with those of history and of knowledge in general, putting the archive to the test of magic.

Méliès Archiving the Tarots

In this operation, a key point of reference is the cinema of Georges Méliès, traces of whose shots recur as postcards in the review. While it is possible that the Surrealists had identified him as the father of the card image, or even as the inventor of a cinematographic model close to the language of the tarots, it is certain that Méliès is the discoverer of montage as an illusion-making trick, as a sleight of hand with images. A glance at his work reveals it as a personal archive of recognisable emblems that undergo extravagant and magical mutations. The fundamental tool of his metamorphoses is exactly the playing card.

Méliès uses the cards as much as a visual reference-point (as a design for a background or for a costume) as he does as themselves magical objects (he animates them with a wand, for instance turning the Queen of Hearts into a young woman who steps out of her frame).

The cards are the means by which he gives form and movement to his personal archive, in which the most diverse visual traditions merge, from Symbolist painting to popular *imagerie*, and from classical mythology to the repertoire of illusionist theatre and *féerie*. The easily-identified figures of pagan divinities, nereids, nymphs, personifications of celestial bodies, come on stage and often halt in long plastic poses as if they were imprinted on some support, thus presenting themselves as "figurines" by means of which, from the director's box, the magus reads the spectator's cards. But Méliès doesn't just take over the function of the magic card, he also exploits its iconography. The reminiscence of the tarots is virtually everywhere, from his self-presentation as the card known as the Bagatto or Bateleur, the card of the Tower reconstructed on the stage, the girl posed like Temperance in the Visconti pack (fig. 26), the iconography of the Sun taken from the Marseille pack (fig. 27) down to the Carriage of Death taken from that associated with Mantegna.

But it is above all the Moon that is the true icon of his cinema, which is thus inscribed under the sign of astrological-divinatory practices, insofar as it is the prime instance of a magical card that undergoes progressive metamorphoses ending up anticipating its future destiny. In the first place, the Moon is presented under the guise of Phoebe a goddess with a sickle-shaped diadem like the woman-moon in the Visconti pack (fig. 28). Then she becomes the disk-face that shines its light on the two medieval towers that make up tarot number 18 in the Marseille pack (fig. 29), then again she becomes the famous anthropomorphic mask that is struck in the eye by the spacecraft, and ends up anticipating the moon-eye cut by the cloud by means of which Buñuel's surrealist film develops the potential of the esoteric variant of the Moon tarot (figs. 30-33).

In Méliès, then, the cinema becomes a pack of magic cards that are cut and associated in montage as a modern form of tarot reading. André Gaudréault is right, then, to suggest that we should regard his cinema not so much as an initial stage in the history of the seventh art, but rather as a fundamental phase in the history of magic. "We have to invert our way of looking at things," he writes "and no longer think of magic as coming to the kinematograph, but rather of the kinematograph being placed in the service of magic."[12]

The idea of cinema in the service of magic takes shape in the climate of the *avant-gardes* and is closely correlated with the artistic and literary background we have outlined. Quite apart from specific contacts, the whole of the culture of the early twentieth century shared an experience and a conception of cinema in which it is configured as one great wheel of fortune, recalled in the shape of the film reel, that spins the cards of the world and projects them on the screen.

From the logo of Charles Urban's distribution house, in which Hermes projects a ray of light while riding a monocycle whose wheel is a reel, to the pages of the various theoreticians, we find a shared conception of cinema, declined in various ways, as based on the equivalence between film images and esoteric, Egyptian and ideogrammatic writings.

In his 1915 book *The Art of the Moving Picture*, Vachel Lindsay dedicates a chapter to this analogy, describing film as a game of cards, which begins with cutting out the eight hundred Egyptian forms in black cards and shuffling them as if they were a pack, while on the white back of each card its abstract sense should be noted.[13]

Abel Gance, who likewise reads cinema as "an art that puts us back onto the expressive level of the Egyptians," organises his most famous film around the idea of the wheel referred to in the title (*La roue*), which he himself explains as an allusion to celestial mechanics: "the leitmotiv of the film is the wheel of a locomotive reminding us of fate [...] It is the Wheel of Fortune."[14] Finally, in Eisenstein the comparison between shots and hieroglyphics is as explicit as it is well known: in his essay on cinema and the haiku, he offers a vision of the images as cards on which are written essential signs from whose combinations there flows a further sense that is "not figurable," and that corresponds to an absolute leap from one level to another. And we all know that his treatise on cinema culminates with the concept of ecstasy, an altered perceptual state induced by an intoxicating "hand of cards," in which the connections among the shots are wilfully obscure and bewildering.

Joseph Cornell's Museum of the Ephemeral

Rather than emphasising the archival and conservative functions of images, the theories of film as a game of cards with fate thus promoted the idea of cinema as a "museum of the ephemeral" and as a "machine of the random." This is an idea whose potential for reflection on the archive and on history has only today become apparent, but at the time – as Rachel Moore has shown in her book *Savage Theory*[15] – it quickly went out of date as too "primitive" and anachronistic to be accepted.

The task of taking it up fell to some artists, among whom the leading figure, crucial for the early twentieth century, is the American Joseph Cornell.

He was so passionate a film-lover that he worked for a time in Hollywood publicity just so as to get his hands on an enormous collection of film stills, out of which he made his own montage films, thus anticipating the post-avant-garde of the 1960s. Cornell was not strictly speaking a collector, even though he had built up an impressive array of visual materials; rather, he preferred to define himself as an "image hunter," one who rummaged with his hands in the flea-markets and second-hand stalls of New York in search of all sorts of prey, but especially prints, photographs, newspaper cuttings and *bric-a-brac* of all sorts: marbles, remnants of fabric, bits of celluloid, dolls' limbs, sweet wrappings, and even grains of sand. He was an archivist of ephemeral images that he then recombined like cards in "atlases" of celestial configurations (compare the "celestial theatre") or in toy-boxes letting chance bring out their mysterious underground relations.

Cornell's montages of *objets trouvés* are well known, but we would like to emphasise above all their continuity with the cinematographer's "games of chance." For the cinema is often to be found in these boxes, especially portraits of actresses both famous, such as Greta Garbo and Lauren Bacall, and the less famous ranks of dancers and girls who had supporting roles in Hollywood films and whom Cornell "miniaturises" along with his own affection as an adoring fan. His underlying objective is to archive cinema itself and to bring out its nature as a primarily romantic archive, insofar as it conserves what is fleeting, the beauty of a star, her purity and youth, and seeks to fix what is by its very nature evanescent. It is also an archive that is open to games of chance. Suffice it to think of the *Penny Arcade Portrait of Lauren Bacall* (1945-1946) (fig. 34).

This is a wooden box that Cornell himself defined as "a cycle wheeling in rotation,"[16] which gets the spectator to look at the diva in sequences that are set by chance. The box is made up of small frames in which are set postcards of New York and photographs of Bacall both as a girl and as an adult. The spectator is invited to take the marble from behind the little glass door at the bottom and to place it at the top from where it enters and runs down tracks on the inside, tracing random and imaginary connections between the sites of the city and the ages of the woman, and at the same time crystallising the experience of image hunting in the jungle of New York. Then the fact that it refers to the games of the penny arcade indicates the sort of marginal popular space where the magic of cinema as gambling has ended up.

Filming as a Game of Chance

The reference to games of chance is all the more marked in the *Medici Slot Machine* (1942) (fig. 35), where the coloured glass collage box presents various strips that break down into its details the grand portrait of the Renaissance nobleman as a child, which we see at the centre in the crosshairs of a gunsight. These little pictures, which are also cards, are set out in columns around the portrait and evoke a *chronophotographic* plate; but they are also mixed in with others that have nothing to do with the painting, as if the fixed order were only one of the many results produced at random by the turning of a handle. Cinema makes images turn like a roulette wheel, or like Marey's *chronophotographic* gun, which was one of the first instruments for the literal "hunt" for filmic images and which, in another work, Cornell strips down and lays out in pieces on a shelf. When then he turns to film, he seems to take Méliès, of whom he was a great fan, as a model. In the first place he "takes in hand" someone else's film, as Méliès had done with the traditional magic cards, and he literally dismantles it, cutting the frames with scissors, and then, like the illusionist, lays the pack out on the table, even turning the "cards" back to front and glueing them together in new sequences. With these personal sleights of hand Cornell is the first to have grasped, and made artistic use of, the manipulability of the still to which Gunning refers. Moreover, in this, he anticipated the much later cinematic development of found footage. From the outset, his is an idea of a tactile cinema: whether it is destined to be projected in a theatre or whether it is to be merely displayed, film is meant to be touched rather than looked at. And we may note in passing that this conception of cinema and of images has made a powerful comeback in the new technologies of the i-Phone and the i-Pad, in which electronic pages are touched and images are moved around by hand. For Cornell, film is from the beginning a thing to be put in a box, it is made of ephemeral fragments that he has stolen from the past and that he projects into the future, thus constructing true atlases of card-stills that are not mere archives and in which, not by chance, the astrological-divinatory dimension re-emerges.

The film *Rose Hobart* of 1936 is a found footage produced almost entirely by the collage reordering of the material from which it begins, namely George Melford's 1931 movie *East of Borneo*. In it, we can see as much the recovered autonomy of the frame-cards, as their divinatory role. *Rose Hobart* is yet another slot machine, in which the images appear, stop, turn and organise themselves; for instance, the same frame, of half figure of the leading actress Rose Hobart returns time and again, but none of the images is allowed its own background: the star's facial expressions and gestures find no correspondence in the objects of her gaze or the direction of her movements; rather, the montage often reverses the order of the frames, stressing the way that every image counts for itself, is returned to the pack to be taken out anew and played in other combinations; for this reason, Philippe Alain Michaud has described the montage of *Rose Hobart* as "phantomatic intermittences."[17] More telling still is the way that there are three radically different "cards" that interrupt the flow of the film and that belong to the genre of scientific documentary: rather less than two minutes of a real solar eclipse, in which the disk of the Sun slowly becomes darker and then lighter again (figs. 36-45), a natural phenomenon that is freighted with mystery and that echoes the volcanic eruption at centre-stage in Melford's film. Cornell was very interested in celestial phenomena, in the planets and their movements, as we can see from the star maps that he put in his boxes; but here the reference to the Sun has a more precise purpose, that of tracing an equivalence between the diva and the star. The centre of Cornell's film is his beloved diva Rose, to whom he dedicates a affective portrait that bears also a sort of premonition: the eclipsed Sun thus seems a evil presage, a tarot of bad luck that appears menacingly on the gaming table.

In short, in this brief review, we have tried to illustrate some convergences among such different figures as Warburg, Méliès and Cornell on the idea of single images as bearers of meanings that only emerge when once they have been handled, juxtaposed and played with as if they were tarots, thus magicking the archive. And we hope that our sleights of hand in bringing out some of these connections have not given the impression of a mere three-card trick.

Illustrations

24. John Barnes Linnet, *The Kineograph*, 1886.

25. Aby Warburg, *Mnemosyne Atlas*, 1923-1929, Plate 50-51: "Handbarmachung."

26. *Left*: Georges Méliès, *Le Magicien*, 1898 / *Right*: *Temperance* (Visconti-Sforza deck).

27. *Left, top*: Georges Méliès, *Voyage à travers l'impossible*, 1904 / *Left, bottom*: Georges Méliès, *Eclipse de soleil en pleine lune*, 1907 / *Right*: *Sun* (Marseille deck).

28. *Left*: *Moon* (Visconti-Sforza deck) / *Right*: Georges Méliès, *La Lune à un mètre*, 1898.

29. *Left*: Georges Méliès, *Le Cauchemar*, 1896 / *Right*: *Moon* (Visconti-Sforza deck).

30. Georges Méliès, *Le Rêve d'un fumeur d'opium*, 1908.

31. Luis Buñuel, *Un chien andalou*, 1929.

32. *Purpose* (Etteilla deck).

33. Luis Buñuel, *Un chien andalou*, 1929.

34. Joseph Cornell, *Untitled (Penny Arcade Portrait of Lauren Bacall)*, c. 1945-46.

35. Joseph Cornell, *Medici Slot-Machine*: *Object*, 1942.

36-45. Joseph Cornell, *Rose Hobart*, 1936.

Magicking the Archive: Collecting as Sleight of Hand

Notes

[*] The contents of the whole paper have been discussed and agreed on by both authors, though for practical purposes we specify that the paragraphs *Archiving the Future, Méliès Archiving the Tarot and Filming as a Game of Chance* have been written by Barbara Grespi, while Alessandra Violi has written *The Archive, the Atlas and Divination* and *Joseph Cornell's Museum of the Ephemeral*. The authors would like to thank Richard Davies for translating this piece and for his invaluable help, support and suggestions.

[1] Mary Ann Doane, *The Instant and the Archive*, in Id., *The Emergence of Cinematic Modernity*, Contingency and the Archive, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass. 2002, pp. 206-232.

[2] Jacques Derrida, "Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression," in *Diacritics*, vol. 25, no. 2, Summer 1995, pp. 9-63, p. 27.

[3] Michel Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge*, Tavistock, London 1972, pp. 79-131.

[4] Mary Ann Doane, *The Instant and the Archive*, cit., p. 222.

[5] Carolyn Steedman, *Dust*, Manchester University Press, Manchester 2001, p. 7.

[6] Tom Gunning, *The Long and the Short of It: Centuries of Projecting Shadows, from Natural Magic to the Avant-Garde*, in Stan Douglas, Christopher Eamon (eds.), *Art of Projection*, Hatje Cantz Verlag, Otfildern 2009, pp. 23-35.

[7] Roger Caillois, *Man, Play and Games* [*Les Jeux et les Hommes*, Paris, Gallimard 1958], University of Illinois Press, Champaign 2001, pp. 147-148.

[8] Michael Dummett, *The History of Tarot*, Duckworth, London 2002.

[9] Georges Didi-Huberman, *Atlas. How to Carry The World on one's back?*, Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid 2010, p. 5.

[10] Walter Benjamin, *On Some Motifs in Baudelaire* (1940), in Id., *Selected Writings*, vol. 4, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass. 2003, pp. 329-332.

[11] Dario Gamboni, *Potential Images*, Reaktion Books, London 2002.

[12] André Gaudreault, "Méliès the Magician. The Magical Magic of the Magic Image," in *Early Popular Visual Culture*, vol. 5, no. 2, July 2007, p. 173.

[13] Vachel Lindsay, *The Art of the Moving Picture* (1915), Bibliobazaar, Charleston 2007, pp. 118-120.

[14] Quoted in Mikhail Iampolski, *The Memory of Tiresias*, University of California Press, Berkeley 1998, p. 134.

[15] Rachel Moore, *Savage Theory. Cinema as Modern Magic*, Duke University Press, Durham 2000.

[16] Joseph Cornell, *Diary Entry 4/4/1967*, in Mary Ann Caws (ed), *Joseph Cornell's Theatre of the Mind. Selected Diaries, Letters and Files*, Thames and Hudson, New York 1993, p. 360.

[17] Philippe Alain Michaud, *La Coalescence et la suture*, in Exhibition Catalogue *La Subversion des images*, Centre Pompidou, Paris 2010, p. 176.

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An Unknow Audience at the Margins of the Auteur Archive: Ingmar Bergman and the Fairy-Tale Theatre

This essay examines documents from the collections of the Ingmar Bergman Archive relating to an early stage in Bergman's career: in 1941, at the age of 23, Bergman was recruited by the city of Stockholm to work as the manager and director of *Sagoteatern* (The Fairy-Tale Theatre), Sweden's first functioning children's theatre, which produced seven plays throughout 1941 and 1942.[1]

The theatre was housed in the Civic Centre in Södermalm, South Stockholm, which at the time was a predominantly working class area. Its ensemble consisted of acting students who worked for free. Staff representatives for each school in the Södermalm area distributed tickets and promotional material at their respective schools. In an information leaflet from 1941 about the aim of the theatre and its repertoire, Bergman explains that the city administration had provided the premises and the stage for free in order to establish a permanent children's theatre in Stockholm.[2]

This was the smallest theatre in the city at the time. The auditorium measured 9 x 6 metres and held as few as 100 seats. The stage similarly measured only 5 x 6 metres but Bergman asserted in the information leaflet that the technical equipment held the same standard as any other stage in Stockholm.

Bergman's original intention was to establish what he called a unique forum for cooperation within the Swedish theatre world, establishing contact with young talented authors and established visual artists.

Another initial ambition was to run two theatres at the same time on the same stage, presenting performances of two separate productions each evening: first (at 6.45 pm), a children's play, within the framework of Sagoteatern, and afterwards (at 9 pm) a production for the general public. About two weeks after the opening of Sagoteatern, Bergman started *Medborgarteatern*, the Civic Theatre. However, only one production, of Strindberg's *Ghost Sonata* (1941), was realised, as the initiative did not garner the same financial support from the politicians of Stockholm.

But several others were planned, among them a production of Lorca's *Blood Wedding*, and in the aforementioned information leaflet these never-to-be-realised productions are listed and described. In fact, while Bergman only lists the titles of the forthcoming children's plays that actually were realised, all the productions planned for The Civic theatre are thoroughly described, although they never came to fruition.

As Michel Foucault famously has argued, the archive is not just a collection of items; it is a construct and discursive formation, an active and controlling system of enunciation.[3] In this respect, it is significant that the Fairy-Tale Theatre material belongs to the margins of the Bergman archive in a number of ways. The documents, which are among the oldest in the collection, were not part of Bergman's original donation of his private archive to the Swedish Film Institute that led to the establishment of the Ingmar Bergman Foundation, and thus it does not belong directly to Bergman's active contribution to the legacy of his authorship as a discourse. The material was acquired later, and was found in the church in Stockholm where Bergman's father was working. Similarly, only very limited portions of this material were included in the Bergman Foundation's process of digitising the archival collection; this is of course due to priorities linked to limited financial resources, the fact is that this does not constitute the most fragile or most sought-after material of the collection, but it nevertheless accentuates the status of this material as belonging to the margins of the Bergman archive.

Still it can be useful to recognise and attend to such margins in order to question and reconsider not so much Bergman's career (as the story of the Fairy-Tale Theatre fits neatly as an early example of Bergman's talent both as an artist and as an entrepreneur), but first and foremost in order to transgress the boundaries associated with what an "auteur archive" consists of and how the material in such an archive can be read, understood, and used.

Central to much of The Fairy-Tale Theatre material is the question of children as a particular audience, and how to define and understand this audience. In his introduction to the new theatre in the programme for its first production, a modernised version of Hans Christian Andersen's *The Tinder Box* (1941), Bergman states: "This children's theatre is an experimental theatre."[4] He continues to assert his avoidance of a pedagogical message in the production, how he rather is trying to communicate to the perceptive young audience by focusing on constantly changing visual elements. The main objective of the newly formed theatre is to fulfil the need of fostering a new theatre audience, in order for children to learn early in the life about the theatre's specific form of expression and the immediacy of the art experience. Somewhat ironically, Bergman asserts the need for the theatre to compete with cinema, which he describes as often containing coarsening elements and a lazy "happiness morality" which needs to be fought.

In the programme for his children's theatre adaptation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1941), Bergman states:

> *How can we – the director and the actors – who are embarking on this "thorny path," with a 5-by-6-metre stage, two small stage doors, and Mendelssohn on the gramophone, salvage even a small fraction of the play for our audience? If we had asked ourselves that question from the beginning, we would probably not have invited you to watch Shakespeare this evening. We will express it differently: why not? We are performing to an audience that is not likely to ever go and see* A Midsummer Night's Dream *unless we try to offer it to them; an audience that is not unlike an audience in Shakespeare's time, at least that's what I think: happy to let any shortcomings pass; an audience that reacts spontaneously without restraint and is openly naive.*[5]

The archival material relating to The Fairy-Tale Theatre is very diverse, and even includes bus tickets and dry cleaning receipts, extensive correspondence with the Stockholm police, regarding charges of carrying out electrical repairs without a licence (of which Bergman actually was convicted in a court of law and given a fine) as well as of using underage actors without proper permission.[6]

In addition to holdings of correspondence, photographs, and programs relating to this institution, the Bergman archive contains interesting reception material: a product of the cooperation which took place between

Sagoteatern and primary schools in the Stockholm area; the reception material is produced by schoolchildren between the ages of 8 and 13 and consists of about 80 drawings or paintings, and about 60 essays (about 40 of these also contain small drawings), conveying audience experiences from five of The Fairy-Tale Theatre's productions.[7] Moreover, articles and speeches written by the young Bergman refer to and analyse the contents of these essays, examining questions of aesthetics, realism, and spectatorship.

One of the most interesting documents relating to this institution is a speech held by Bergman during a meeting with politicians and representatives of the Stockholm school district after the theatre's first production.[8] Here, the reception material is presented as a strategy to avoid the lack of success experienced by earlier attempts at establishing children's theatres in Sweden in terms of reaching an audience. Bergman emphasises the importance of knowing what the theatre's audience – what he calls "an unknown audience," without a voice – really wants to see (and not their mothers or spokespersons), but also how they perceive a play and form opinions on what is good and what is not. The only way to gain knowledge of this, Bergman claims, is through an intimate collaboration with school principals, as well as Swedish and art teachers.

The school children's essays and drawings function similarly to empirical micro-studies later associated with cultural studies: they reveal individual experiences and individual memories of cultural products that also are linked to social position: being children, belonging to a specific geographical area, and social class. They reveal particular modes of viewing and particular ways of narrativising oneself and one's own experiences.

The drawings may tell us something about the relationship between visual impression and imagination, sometimes by comparing them with the promotional photographs held by the archive – e.g. different visual representations of the wolf in *Little Red Riding Hood* (1942), a play Bergman incidentally referred to as "a children's *Ghost Sonata*" (figs. 46 and 47). Sometimes the drawings, as well as the essays, may provide, albeit subjective and unreliable, additional information about the play. There are no photos of how Bergman chose to visually represent the three big dogs in *The Tinder Box*, the ones with eyes as big as tea cups, mill-wheels, and round towers, respectively. They recur in the children's drawings, however, but provide more evidence of different spectators' experience and imagination (as well as drawing abilities) than perhaps of what the dogs really looked like on stage (figs. 48, 49 and 50).

To quote the aforementioned speech by Bergman, where he is briefly analysing the reception material from *The Tinder Box*:

> *The essays we have received and the kids we have interviewed clearly show that they are relatively uninterested in the actual story. Instead, it is clear that individual, often violent or grotesque, events are the ones that are remembered and appreciated most, without any reference backwards or forwards in the narrative. The Witch has always been popular, both in the children's drawings and in their essays.*[9]

The enjoyment of very concrete, very specific moments recur throughout most of the essays: descriptions of facial expressions, specific pieces of dialogue, the way Puck in A Midsummer Night's Dream runs around the stage, the actors hitting each other in the head, the dance between Little Red Riding Hood and the Wolf, the actors taking a bow during applause. Several children also mention the beauty of the actors' costumes, and similarly of the scenery, e.g. the forest and the starry sky in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. As reception studies focusing on the significance of memories have shown, this is also indicative of how memory works, normally not being broken down into stories but into images, to paraphrase Walter Benjamin.

These descriptions of individual moments or "images" and their emotional effects also accentuate spectatorship as individual experiences. For example, the essays reveal that the illusion of lightening at certain moments in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was achieved by flashing the stage lighting, using sudden shifts between strong light and complete darkness, while playing the organ – these moments are described as extremely frightening in some essays and as purely entertaining in others.

Some essays, in particular written by older children, focus on notions of realism, often linked to speech, complimenting certain actors for speaking naturally – "exactly as in real life" – as one essay states. In another essay it is pointed out that the baker in *Little Red Riding Hood* was wearing a proper baker's attire but that clearly the cake was not real. Others complain about the posture of the wolf (being too straight), and that the mother washed her clothes in an unrealistic manner, one could see that there was no water in the bucket she was using. There are also intertextual observations: a couple of the essays point out how Oberon in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* looks like the Queen in Disney's *Snow White*.

Other essays deal more with the extra-textual experiences of theatre-going than the play itself: one essay by a 10-year-old boy spends one sentence on the play, saying "it was very good," the rest of the essay describes the dimension of the stage and the auditorium (many of the pupils mention being surprised by how small it is), the crowd which amassed when the play was over, feeling the fresh air when he finally got out, coming home and going to bed.

Several essays focus on details such as the time the play started, on waiting impatiently, and the specific location of the theatre, which entrance one should use, where in the auditorium one is seated, the price of the ticket. Another essay by a 10-year-old girl deals with social interactions, talking to the boy she is sitting next to, referring a funny scene primarily by describing how the both of them laughed together, and even mentioning telling her parents about the play after coming home and about their reactions. Other essays mention acting out characters from the play afterwards. Having fun at the theatre is mentioned along with having fun on the tram on the way home. "The fairies were very sweet," one girl writes, and adds: "I've seen one of them on the street." *Little Red Riding Hood* also featured sing-along sessions in between acts that are mentioned almost to the same extent as the contents of the play in many of the essays. Similarly, recent ethnographic studies of memories of going to the cinema, e.g. Annette Kuhn's influential *Dreaming of Ginger and Fred*, dealing with Britain in the 1930s, emphasise the ritual, spatial and social aspects of cinema-going as being in many ways more important than the contents of the texts the spectators were watching.[10]

The notion of the auteur, in traditional cinema studies, has been often associated as contrary to such perspectives and is usually placed in opposition to later movements and areas of interest brought about by what is often called the empirical or historical turn, as well as the cultural turn. In the case of "auteur archives," however, the notion of an "archive" obviously provides auteurism with an implied empirical or historical dimension, but likewise, as the reception material from the Fairy-Tale Theatre demonstrates: Just as the materials relating to this theatre reveal important aspects of Bergman's early artistic development, aesthetic ideals, and work methods, this essay has also aimed to demonstrate the range of cultural practices perhaps seldom associated with auteurism or "film art" (children's culture, the use of art in education, the experience of spectatorship) which nonetheless can be incorporated in an "auteur archive." Paradoxically, perhaps, without an institution such as the Bergman archive these cultural practices, and the voices of this unknown audience, would probably not be preserved or made available anywhere.

Illustrations

46. *Little Red Riding Hood*, 1942.

47. *Little Red Riding Hood* children's drawing.

48. *The Tinder Box* children's drawings.
49. *The Tinder Box* children's drawings.
50. *The Tinder Box* children's drawings.

Notes

[1] See Birgitta Steene, *Ingmar Bergman: A Reference Guide*, Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam 2005, pp. 495-505. See also Paul Duncan, Bengt Wanselius (eds.), *The Ingmar Bergman Archives*, Taschen, Cologne 2008, pp. 93-97.

[2] "Informationsblad om verksamhet och repertoar" (1941), The Ingmar Bergman Archive J:004. "PM för Sagoteaterns ombud" (1941), The Ingmar Bergman Archive J:006.

[3] Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Routledge, London 2002, pp. 142-148.

[4] "Introduktion till Sagoteatern" (1941), The Ingmar Bergman Archive P:002:04. See also Paul Duncan, Bengt Wanselius (eds.), *The Ingmar Bergman Archives*, cit., p. 94.

[5] Paul Duncan, Bengt Wanselius (eds.), *The Ingmar Bergman Archives*, cit., pp. 94-95. The Ingmar Bergman Archive P:002:06.

[6] The Ingmar Bergman Archive J:009.

[7] *Elddonet / The Tinder Box* (1941): 40 drawings/painting; *En midsommarnattsdröm / A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1941) 37 illustrated essays, 15 paintings; *Fågel Blå / Bluebird* (1941): 7 drawings/paintings; *Sniggel Snuggel & De tre dumbeterna / Sniggel Snuggel & The Three Stupidities* (1942): 7 drawings/paintings; *Rödluvan / Little Red Riding Hood* (1942): 22 essays, 11 drawings. The Ingmar Bergman Archive J:018-019.

[8] "Tal om barnteater" (1941), The Ingmar Bergman Archive, J:008.

[9] The Ingmar Bergman Archive J:008. Paul Duncan, Bengt Wanselius (eds.), *The Ingmar Bergman Archives*, cit., p. 94.

[10] Annette Kuhn, *Dreaming of Fred and Ginger*, New York University Press, New York 2002.

Film as Archive

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Le immagini filmiche sono degli archivi filmati?[*1]

Partiremo dall'idea semplicistica che le immagini di un film possano essere considerate come *archivi* di un "evento" qualunque, catturato da un apparecchio di registrazione, da quella macchina registratrice che è la cinepresa. Ogni dispositivo di registrazione sarebbe, in tale maniera, suscettibile di costituire e di restituire un documento che ha valore d'archivio. Così sarebbe il caso di *ogni immagine filmica*, qualunque sia il film e il genere a cui si riferisce. A patto, ben inteso, che essa sia il prodotto di un'impronta fotografica.

Approfondiamo, di seguito, questo luogo comune. Se dovessimo *documentarci*, per esempio, su un'attrice del muto, diciamo Mary Pickford, potremmo fare riferimento ad immagini documentarie *registrate* durante la *tournée* trionfale che l'attrice ha effettuato in URSS con Douglas Fairbanks, nel 1926. Potremmo allo stesso modo, sempre nel solo e unico obiettivo di documentarci sull'attrice, fare ricorso a inquadrature tratte da film di finzione nei quali lei interpreta il ruolo della *vedette*. Osservandole da vicino, queste inquadrature che registrano un qualunque segmento dell'azione del film *Sparrows* (*Les Moineaux*, 1926), ci documenterebbero sullo stile, la prestanza o la *performance* attoriale della Pickford.

In casi simili, lo spettatore sarà portato a disattivare ciò che Roger Odin chiama la "lettura finzionalizzante" (secondo la quale il film è concepito), e a privilegiare un altro regime di lettura, quello della "lettura documentarizzante", sempre secondo Odin,[2] di cui una delle modalità sarebbe, per noi, la "lettura archivizzante".[3]

All'inizio del nostro cammino, ci sarebbero, dunque, due tipi di *immagini registrate* che rendono possibile una *lettura archivizzante*. Questi due tipi corrispondono alla dicotomia documentario/finzione, *cliché* per eccellenza della riflessione filmica, o della sua non-riflessione…

Da una parte, dunque, abbiamo immagini registrate da operatori-*reporters* al servizio delle grandi imprese di informazione, che le hanno prelevate dal mondo reale che ci circonda, un mondo che le star del muto hanno percorso trionfalmente, per quanto vasto esso sia.

Dall'altra parte, abbiamo immagini girate per la finzione, da operatori al servizio dei grandi *studios*, diciamo, e di cui possiamo aggirare il senso perché, lo si è detto spesso, niente ci impedisce di leggerle attraverso il loro valore di *documento*, per il loro valore *documentario*, per il valore che esse hanno di documentare la prestazione di tale o tal altro attore o attrice che, nel mondo reale di uno studio, hanno giocato al gioco del "come se". Perché il semplice fatto di interpretare o di girare un film (che sia o meno di finzione) fa parte di questo mondo che chiamiamo reale, allo stesso titolo con cui visitiamo un paese straniero o ci facciamo la *toilette* la mattina.

Ma, ben inteso, le cose non sono così semplici come la dicotomia documentario/finzione ci potrebbe far credere, ed è possibile che ciò complichi un po' la nostra nomenclatura: non immaginando semplicemente delle ramificazioni che partirebbero da ciascuno di questi due poli che sono il documentario e la finzione, ma spostandone di un poco la prospettiva, per tener conto del tema stesso del convegno di Udine, da cui il presente intervento prende le mosse, cioè gli archivi.[4]

Per muoverci in questo senso, faremo una deviazione attraverso questo nuovo tipo di spettacolo che sono le Opere filmate (*Opéras filmés*) che vengono offerte al giorno d'oggi nelle sale cinematografiche e che sono spesso diffuse in diretta (come lo si fa, sempre più regolarmente, anche per spettacoli sportivi come il pugilato, le grandi interviste, le competizioni sportive, delle *pièces* di teatro o ancora dei balletti, mettendo così per qualche ora la sala cinematografica al servizio di un'altra serie culturale: invece che il cinema, la *televisione-agorà*)...[5]

Abbiamo già messo in luce[6] quanto il discorso ufficiale prodotto dalle istanze responsabili della distribuzione commerciale dei prodotti della *televisione-agorà* tenda a produrre una certa forma di "diniego" (*dénégation*) e di disinformazione (*désinformation*), dato che dal materiale pubblicitario non traspare nulla che attesti quanto tali rappresentazioni siano il risultato di una regia particolarmente attiva.

Così com'è accaduto con il volantino distribuito nelle sale cinematografiche che presentava a Montréal, nel novembre 2009, l'Opera della *Turandot*, trasmessa in diretta dal Metropolitan Opera di New York, e che non faceva alcuna menzione di chi fosse l'autore delle immagini che ci si apprestava a vedere...

Oppure con il caso di "diniego" nel manifesto[7] che annunciava un balletto presentato in differita nel 2007 (*Cenerentola*, di Noureev), sempre a Montréal, e che allo stesso modo non faceva minimo cenno all'*istanza responsabile della messa in immagini*.

Non è sorprendente dunque che lo stesso manifesto descrivesse il procedimento impiegato per permettere la differita come derivante da una semplice *registrazione* della prestazione scenica originale. Lasciando così intendere che la suddetta *performance* sarebbe stata resa, nella sala cinematografica, in modo da rispettare il più scrupolosamente possibile la sua integrità scenica originale, attraverso una tecnica veramente di base, analoga a quella impiegata dalle telecamere di sorveglianza.

Eppure, non è stato per niente così. In effetti, come mostrano gli estratti ritrasmessi a posteriori dalla televisione francese,[8] il prodotto finito della versione filmata di questo balletto è, contro ogni attesa, il risultato di una ripresa con telecamere multiple, che conserva la traccia della presenza attiva di un'*equipe* di regia che non si è affatto limitata ad una registrazione passiva e neutra.

Ciò provoca evidentemente una collisione tra serie culturali finora reputate autonome, la serie culturale "balletto" e la serie culturale "cinema", o come dicevamo, la serie culturale "Opera" con la serie culturale "cinema".

Le critiche che provengono dalla serie culturale "Opera" non sbagliano reclamando a gran voce un rispetto maggiore dell'Opera scenica originale. In questo modo si è mosso per esempio Cristophe Huss, critico musicale del quotidiano *Le Devoir* di Montréal, che, in maniera sintomatica e fortemente rivelatrice, ha finito per prendere di mira il regista Gary Halvorson, uno dei più importanti "registi" o meglio *metteurs en images* delle opere del Met di New York.

Secondo il critico del *Devoir*, il genere delle Opere filmate dovrebbe essere inteso come una semplice *diffusione*, *trasmissione* a distanza, di un'Opera già inserita, già formata – già pre-formata potremmo dire –, all'interno di un'*altra* serie culturale *che non è il cinema*. Altrimenti si corre il rischio, come afferma il critico, di dover subire "l'ingerenza dello spettacolo a colpi di montaggio isterici […], di *travellings* nervosi e di *contre-plongées* impossibili".[9] La diffusione di Opere nelle sale cinematografiche non ha dunque "bisogno di un cineasta virtuoso e agitato".[10] Ciò di cui hanno bisogno, è "di un semplice *testimone* dell'azione teatrale".[11]

Per rispettare lo spettacolo originale, bisognerebbe, cioè, favorire una visione ampia: "la poesia di questo spettacolo inserita, all'interno della sala, in una vista d'insieme, che è esattamente contraria all'estetica della diffusione cinematografica – che usa e abusa degli zoom e di effetti visivi".[12] Non dovrebbe trattarsi, tutto sommato, che di filmare l'Opera, rifiutando ogni forma di contaminazione di una serie culturale (l'Opera) attraverso un'altra (il cinema). Queste Opere filmate devono dunque restare delle… Opere *filmate*, appunto, e non devono soprattutto diventare delle Opere *filmiche*…

Devono accontentarsi di essere *copie*, semplici copie, così come accadeva con la fotografia di riproduzione, o anche con il cinematografo, se seguiamo ciò che diceva dal 1908 Ricciotto Canudo:

> *[…] Le Cinématographe […] n'est pas encore de l'art, lui manquent les éléments du choix typique de l'interprétation plastique et non de la copie d'un sujet, qui feront toujours que la photographie ne sera jamais un art.*[13]

Ciò che i registi nervosi e virtuosi delle Opere filmate ci propongono, in fondo, è un'interpretazione plastica dell'Opera di un Tale, messa in scena da un Tal Altro. Ciò che essi ci propongono è dunque la loro *interpretazione* filmica dell'*interpretazione* scenica dell'*interpretazione* operistica dell'autore del libretto. Cioè un'*interpretazione* plastica al cubo…

Le Opere filmate dovrebbero cioè, secondo alcuni, generarsi attraverso una semplice cattura di "pacchetti attrazionali" (*packages attractionnels*) per riprendere un'espressione che abbiamo suggerito nel 2006 a Udine, per identificare i processi d'importazione effettuati da Edison, nel suo studio di West Orange di spettacoli già predeterminati, predefiniti e preformattati, dentro e a partire da una serie culturale extra-cinematografica.[14] Come nel caso di Eugène Sandow, il famoso culturista della fine del ventesimo secolo, che si esibiva sui palcoscenici di tutto il mondo e che fu l'oggetto di una ripresa "kinetografica" nello studio di Edison il 18 maggio 1894, commercializzata poi in una pellicola che ricava il titolo di *Sandow*.

Quando il regista di un "pacchetto attrazionale" operistico s'impegna fino in fondo in un'interpretazione plastica, rischia di fare un affronto all'Opera originale, sovrapponendo un nuovo strato discorsivo al discorso della messa in scena specificamente operistica. Per i puristi, le Opere filmiche non dovrebbero dunque essere sottoposte ad una qualsiasi forma di "creazione" da parte di un cineasta e dovrebbero risultare da una semplice registrazione.

Una semplice registrazione… che potrà permettere a questi spettacoli, se si conserveranno così a lungo, di accedere *a posteriori* allo statuto di archivio, cosa che è molto difficile per definizione, dato che si tratta di *spettacolo dal vivo*. Uno "spettacolo dal vivo" che così, dal momento in cui è registrato su di un supporto, e diventando virtualmente archivio, non è più uno "spettacolo dal vivo" ma "spettacolo registrato", per riprendere una dicotomia desunta dalla legislazione francese e che è cara ai membri della corporazione designata in Francia sotto il nome di "*intermittents du spectacle*".

Questa dicotomia ci permetterà di fare avanzare la nostra riflessione. In effetti, accanto allo spettacolo dal vivo che sarebbe l'Opera in una *sala d'Opera*, e dello spettacolo registrato che sarebbe, diciamo, la stessa Opera diffusa in una sala *cinematografica*, qual è il posto occupato dal film? Un'Opera cinematografica è uno spettacolo dal vivo? No, certo! *Ma è quindi uno spettacolo registrato*? Neanche, checché se ne possa pensare a prima vista.

Ben inteso, come uno spettacolo registrato, un film si compone di prestazioni attoriali registrate su di un supporto che permette una conservazione che può dar luogo ad un'ulteriore diffusione in differita. *Ma un film non è, se ne converrà, uno spettacolo registrato.* Come ogni spettacolo registrato, un film è prodotto grazie ad un apparecchio che, almeno all'inizio, non serve che a registrare.

Sorge qui un apparente paradosso: come spiegare, in effetti, che un solo e unico apparecchio possa permettere, in un caso, di trasformare uno spettacolo *dal vivo* in spettacolo *registrato* e, in un altro caso, celare tutt'altra cosa o quasi, cioè, questi spettacoli *né* registrati, *né* viventi che sono i film?

Normalmente un registratore (una macchina per registrare) non fa che una cosa: registra (logicamente!). E "esso" registra qualcosa che, alla fine, è sempre già e per necessità, dal vivo. Eppure ciò che produce è sempre già e per necessità registrato... Com'è possibile allora che l'apparecchio cinematografico nasconda una "cosa" così "altra" rispetto al puramente e semplicemente registrato?

Cos'è accaduto perché una tal cosa avvenisse, *cos'è accaduto* perché una tale possibilità sorgesse? Molto semplicemente è successo che – molto semplicemente non è che un modo di dire, ben inteso – l'apparecchio di *registrazione* inventato, come si dice, dai fratelli Lumière (e che serviva all'inizio a mettere su pellicola un mondo che veniva fatto svolgere davanti ad esso, o davanti al quale ci si metteva prima di azionare la manovella) ha finito per perdere il suo statuto, in apparenza permanente, di semplice macchina registrante. È accaduto che, nel tempo, con l'istituzionalizzazione del cinema, l'apparecchio di ripresa sia diventato altro da una semplice macchina di ripresa e riproduzione.

Ed è successo che una nuova categoria di artisti – i cineasti – ha cominciato a sovrapporre al mondo registrato dai manovratori di manovelle, una nuova dimensione di senso, che per essere produttiva, doveva negare, in qualche misura, il carattere primigenio delle immagini sulle quali tuttavia questa nuova dimensione si depositava.

Pensiamo ad un film come *Casablanca* (Michael Curtiz, 1942). La lettura che noi siamo chiamati a fare nel corso della proiezione di un film di questo tipo neutralizza l'aspetto "archivistico" dato dalla semplice registrazione della prestazione attoriale: una prestazione fissata nel tempo e "databile", che perde quell'*ancoraggio* garantito dalla sua "databilità". È un po' come se il materiale filmico fosse *trasfigurato* e subisse gli effetti di un processo di superamento, di trascendenza, di "*sursomption*",[15] di "*Aufhebung*".

Per articolare e fondere insieme due formule celebri, l'una di Roland Barthes e l'altra di Octave Mannoni, potremmo dire: "so bene che questo è stato – so bene che questo è stato registrato, prelevato dal reale, prelevato da qualcosa di a-filmico –, ma allo stesso tempo, voglio dimenticarlo per poter accedere all'universo filmico".

Di qui il fatto che converrebbe, ci sembra, distinguere due tipi di archiviazione: "l'archiviazione di riproduzione" e "l'archiviazione d'espressione". L'archiviazione di riproduzione sarebbe in rapporto diretto con le capacità di riproduzione del dispositivo di base che, secondo gli stessi Lumière, "*permet de recueillir [...] tous les mouvements qui [...] se sont succédé devant l'objectif, et de reproduire ensuite ces mouvements*".[16]

Per chiamare "di riproduzione" questo tipo di archiviazione, ci ispiriamo a Malraux e alla sua descrizione della dimensione fotografica del cinema:

> *Tant que le cinéma n'était que le moyen de reproduction de personnages en mouvement, il n'était pas plus un art que la phonographie ou la photographie de reproduction. Dans un espace, généralement une scène de théâtre véritable ou imaginaire, des acteurs évoluaient, représentaient une pièce ou une farce que l'appareil se bornait à enregistrer.*[17]

Questa sarebbe la facoltà di archiviazione propria al *medium* cinema, basata sulle attitudini di registrazione del film (che raccoglie ciò che farà documento) e che definirebbe un aspetto allografico di archiviazione "ontologica" di cattura-restituzione di ciò che Souriau chiama l'"a-filmico".

L'istanza rappresentativa di questo aspetto delle cose, sarebbe *colui che gira la manovella.*

Accanto all'archiviazione di riproduzione, ci sarebbe anche l'archiviazione d'espressione, che sopraggiunge una volta che si è sospinto il *medium* ad andare oltre la sola capacità di registrazione, ovvero la facoltà dell'apparecchio di base di procedere alla cattura-restituzione di ciò che si produce di fronte ad esso.

Il *medium* trova così la propria espressività mediatica attraverso lo stile e l'opacità espressiva del suo autore, o almeno di un enunciatore mediatico che si presenta come tale. Ciò che allora è archiviato ad un secondo livello è lo stile del creatore che ha conferito al *medium* filmico una forma qualunque di supplemento emotivo. Saremmo allora in presenza dell'aspetto autobiografico di un'archiviazione, una registrazione non più semplicemente di ciò che è accaduto davanti alla cinepresa, ma anche, in un certo senso, di ciò che è accaduto *dietro di lei*. Questa forma alternativa di archiviazione testimonierebbe allora la creazione di un universo propriamente filmico. Non dimentichiamo che, per Souriau, un film permette in qualche misura di nascondere un universo etereo situato da qualche parte al di sopra di ogni iscrizione nel reale e della sua iscrizione su di un supporto. Il cinema ci inviterebbe, in effetti, secondo lo studioso a "viaggi immobili attraverso questo universo filmico".

Notiamo che l'archiviazione di espressione non appartiene allo stesso regime evenemenziale del primo, l'archiviazione di riproduzione. In effetti, quest'ultimo dimora nell'ordine del virtuale mentre l'altro si integra in una dimensione quasi ontologica: l'effetto d'archivio si profila necessariamente a partire dal momento in cui ci sia cattura-restituzione, ovvero una registrazione; è per così dire incorporato nel dispositivo stesso. Al contrario, perché nel quadro dell'espressione la dimensione sia attivata, è necessaria una volontà esogena, estrinseca, di cogliere e conservare una maniera specifica (legata ad uno stile, ad un autore, ad una corrente, un genere…) di negoziare con le possibilità espressive di un *medium* in una determinata epoca o cultura.

L'istanza rappresentativa in una tale situazione, non sarebbe più allora il prosaico manovratore di manovella, ma quel vero "creatore dell'universo filmico" che sarebbe il cineasta.

La modalità dell'archiviazione di riproduzione, il nostro primo caso, sarebbe la "registrazione", laddove regna incontrastato l'"operatore alla manovella"; la modalità dell'archiviazione di espressione, il nostro secondo caso, sarebbe, invece, la "ripresa", laddove regna incontrastato il cineasta. *Registrazione* non è dunque *ripresa*, e *ripresa* non è *registrazione*. Ci sarebbero cioè due modalità differenti di rapportarsi alle immagini da catturare con un apparecchio cinematografico.

Nel caso della registrazione, della messa in registrazione dell'"archiviabile", ovvero di ciò che abbiamo chiamato facendo riferimento a Malraux "archiviazione di riproduzione", potremmo quasi affermare che abbiamo a che fare con una realtà *performata*, cioè una realtà pre-configurata come direbbe Paul Ricoeur (quando sviluppa il proprio sistema delle "tre mimesi"). È dunque una realtà autonoma e "datata", fissata nel tempo, che ci si accontenta di *prelevare* e *registrare*.

Per riallacciarci a Sourieau, si riprende e si registra qualcosa di a-filmico, trasformando così questo a-filmico in archivio virtuale. Iscriversi in un processo di *registrazione* significa, dunque, che ci si pone sotto un principio di virtualità: quello per cui si rispetta la realtà da riprendere. L'importante risiede qui nel fatto di poterla riprendere e conservare in tutto il proprio spessore.

Si rispetta l'aspetto già *pre-formato* di questa realtà: il cineasta non è autorizzato ad intervenire e rifiuta di manipolarla, di trasformarla. È letteralmente, *registrazione*, non una *ripresa*.

Ricordiamoci il senso implicito dei rimproveri che il critico Huss faceva ai registi di Opere fimate: evitare di rielaborare lo spettacolo d'Opera a colpi di "montaggi isterici", di "*travellings* nervosi" e di "*contre-plongées* impossibili". Preferibile piuttosto, in una parola, accontentarsi di fare una semplice *registrazione*, e di non passare a quello stadio superiore che è la *ripresa*…

Detto altrimenti: "Registro, dunque archivio!". Dove sta scritto che colui che registra "pacchetti attrazionali" non debba considerarsi un cineasta? Semplice *direttore visivo* è, e semplice *direttore visivo* resterà:

> *La production (ancienne) [de* Manon Lescaut*] du Met fait l'affaire [...]. Très bon niveau d'ensemble, avec le ténor Marcello Giordani, Levine à la baguette et l'élégante régie visuelle de Brian Large.*[18]

"L'elegante regia visiva di Brian Large", perché Brian Large è, in effetti, l'idolo del critico del giornale *Le Devoir*. Brian Large non gioca come Gary Halvorson a fare il grande regista, né come Barbara Willis Sweete, altra direttrice d'immagini dell'Opera del Met: egli ne fa semplicemente la regia visiva, e lo fa con eleganza. Brian Large, un uomo dal nome predestinato, perché privilegia una visione "ampia" ed inquadrature "larghe":

> *Hélas, le Met a confié la réalisation vidéo de son spectacle le plus important de l'année à la sous-douée Barbara Willis Sweete, dont le principal titre de gloire a été de massacrer le* Tristan *de Wagner la saison dernière. Ses errances dans sa réalisation de sans-dessein, sa manière grotesque de tourner en rond avec la caméra en cherchant quelque chose à filmer et d'aller scruter des cellules du dispositif scénique quand une vision large s'imposait ont tué le spectacle.*[19]

Se la modalità dell'archiviazione di riproduzione, il nostro primo caso, si produce tramite una semplice "registrazione", la modalità dell'archiviazione d'espressione, il nostro secondo caso, si produrrebbe invece attraverso la modalità della "ripresa". Se tramite l'archiviazione di riproduzione abbiamo a che fare con una realtà *pre-formata*, con l'archiviazione d'espressione, abbiamo piuttosto a che fare con una realtà "performata", "performata" attraverso l'attività stessa di ripresa.

In questo paradigma, il regista può autorizzarsi ad adattare il pro-filmico, a manipolarlo, a sofisticarlo ecc. La realtà è dunque *performata* nel senso in cui è "potenziata" ai fini della sua successiva "mostrazione", questo atto deliberato e intenzionale di produrre una rappresentazione visiva, e/o ai fini della narrazione, quest'atto comunque deliberato di riconfigurare, di *porre in un intrigo* un dato *evenemenziale*, in una armatura diegetica più o meno elaborata. È, come abbiamo già fatto notare altrove, la *cinematografazione*.[20] La cattura diventa ripresa, ed il lavoro del regista aggiunge un non-so-che alle immagini registrate. È quello che abbiamo chiamato poco fa l'"*Aufhebung*".

La ripresa dunque, al contrario della semplice registrazione, introduce l'espressione, il punto di vista di un operatore-soggetto, che inietta nelle immagini questo supplemento che trascende la semplice registrazione. È qui che risiede la *cinematografazione*. L'archiviazione che ne deriva è, solidamente, di un altro ordine: non più una semplice conservazione di uno spazio-tempo datato, ma la traccia di una riappropriazione espressiva e filmica.

È a questo livello di *performance* espressiva che si realizza l'universo filmico: *nell'affrancamento dalla contingenza storica che fa in modo che i fatti ed i gesti di un attore non siano conservati per se stessi, ma come parte integrante di un universo filmico nel quale esso si integra.*

Con la ripresa, si avvera un *come se* a livello degli attori (l'attore si comporta come se fosse il tal personaggio), ma c'è anche un *come se* a livello della cinepresa. In effetti, la cinepresa si comporta come se registrasse un dato referenziale mentre in realtà serve a fare di più: essa permette l'accesso ad una procedura, la ripresa, che trascende la semplice registrazione per fare in modo che l'universo filmico venga alla luce.

Prima di *mettere in moto* l'universo filmico, e dunque di poter accedere al superamento garantito dall'*archiviazione d'espressione*, il film deve inevitabilmente passare per una fase di archiviazione di riproduzione, per così dire involontaria o "ontologica". È qui che risiede il paradosso già evocato: bisogna passare per una registrazione, per una "messa in registro", per meglio trascenderla, liberando l'accesso all'universo filmico. L'effetto archivio è indispensabile per fare dei film basati sulla cattura-restituzione. Senza archiviazione del reale catturato, sarebbe impossibile montare, costruire il film. Ma questa archiviazione non corrisponde alla finalità del film, che cerca di accedere all'universo filmico (e dunque che è alla ricerca di una forma di dissociazione con l'universo a-filmico).

Per mettere in moto l'universo filmico soggiacente al processo di ripresa, bisogna disinnescare, neutralizzare l'universo della semplice cattura-restituzione, bisogna dimenticare l'archiviazione di riproduzione.

Concludiamo la nostra riflessione prendendo in considerazione quella particolare forma di *archiviazione* costituita dai *making of*. Essi rivestono uno statuto differente in base al fatto che vengano prodotti nel quadro di un'Opera filmata o in quello di un film che nasconde un universo filmico.

Nella maggior parte dei casi fin qui considerati, i *making of* di un'Opera filmata non fanno che rafforzare l'idea di operazioni di ripresa rispettose: sulla punta dei piedi mostrano come si è archiviato, cioè come si è colto modestamente, in tutta chiarezza, un dispositivo di registrazione (con tanto di cineprese fedeli, piazzate qui e là, per catturare al meglio il pacchetto attrazionale, la cerimonia, la *grande messa* operistica).

Succede molto diversamente per i *making of* che accompagnano i DVD dei film oggi sul mercato. Nella maggior parte dei casi, questi *making of* hanno come missione di attestare che c'è stato, a monte del film e prima dell'"*Aufhebung*", prima dell'epifania dell'universo filmico, un lavoro di *performance* debitamente registrato, adeguatamente – talvolta in maniera laboriosa, o pericolosa, o ludica – catturato.

Ciò che ci offrono tali *making of*, è la possibilità di rallentare la velocità di crociera dell'universo filmico. Ciò che ci offrono, è in fin dei conti un ritorno all'*archiviazione di riproduzione*, terreno indispensabile perché possa manifestarsi l'epifania filmica. Ma questa dimensione "archivistica" ontologica che abbiamo ricordato non si realizza come un semplice supplemento… Attraverso la forza stessa dell'*archiviazione di riproduzione*, essa testimonia che ci sono state una serie di *perfomances* (tanto sul piano a-filmico, profilmico, che filmografico) e che queste performance sono state registrate, catturate-restituite per meglio assicuravi il vostro *make believe*, cari spettatori…

Note

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[1] Questo lavoro, nella sua parte *quebecchese*, è stato scritto nel quadro dei lavori di GRAFICS (Groupe de Recherche sur l'Avènement et la Formation des Institutions Cinématographique et Scénique) dell'Université de Montréal, sovvenzionato dal Consiglio di ricerca in scienze umane del Canada e i fondi FCAR del Québec. GRAFICS fa parte del Centro di ricerca sull'intermedialità (CRI). Nella sua parte belga, la riflessione e la ricerca che attesta questo lavoro sono stati realizzati nel quadro dei lavori dell'Osservatorio del racconto mediatico (ORM) dell'Università cattolica di Louvain.

[2] Vedi Roger Odin, *Le Film documentaire, lecture documentarisante*, in Jean-Charles Lyant, Roger Odin (a cura di), *Cinéma et réalités* (Travaux no XLI), CIEREC/Université de Saint-Étienne, Saint-Étienne 1984, pp. 263-278.

[3] Nel suo testo del 1984, Odin spiega che una delle specificità della lettura *documentarizzante* "è che il lettore costruisce l'immagine dell'Enunciatore, presupponendo la realtà di questo Enunciatore", Roger Odin, *Le Film documentaire, lecture documentarisante*, cit., p. 267. Così si recepiscono i film, tutti i film (che siano documentari o di finzione, perché Odin precisa che le immagini di finzione possono anch'esse attivare un processo di lettura *documentarizzante*) supponendo che queste immagini siano state prodotte da qualcuno che esisterebbe nella realtà extra-filmica e che sarebbe responsabile dell'adeguazione del suo enunciato alla realtà. La modalità di lettura *documentarizzante*, che consisterebbe nella nostra lettura *archivizzante*, si distinguerebbe principalmente per un duplice

obbiettivo: raccogliere e conservare dei documenti, in cui la dimensione di conservazione agirebbe in vista di una consultazione ulteriore, tratto comune di ogni definizione della parola archivio.

[4] FilmForum/2011, XVIII Convegno Internazionale di Studi sul Cinema, *L'archivio/The Archive*, Università degli Studi di Udine, tenutosi nell'aprile 2011. Il presente testo è una versione largamente rimaneggiata dell'intervento che gli autori hanno presentato al suddetto convegno.

[5] André Gaudreault, "*Home cinema* et agora-télé: deux oxymores de notre modernité médiatique", convegno congiunto: Martin Walsh Memorial Lecture (*Film Studies Association of Canada*) al Congresso delle società dotte del Canada e convegno *Moving Images Studies: History(ies), Method(s), Discipline(s)*), ARTHEMIS (*Advanced Research Team on History and Epistemology of Moving Image Study*), Montréal, giugno 2010. In via di pubblicazione. Vedere anche André Gaudreault, Philippe Marion, *Il cinema è morto, ancora! Un medium e le sue crisi d'identità*, in Francesco Cassetti, Jane Gaines, Valentina Re (a cura di), *Dall'inizio, alla fine/In the Very Beginning, at the Very End. Teorie del cinema in prospettiva/Film Theories in Perspective*, Forum, Udine 2010, pp. 135-142. Articolo in corso di pubblicazione in lingua francese, con il titolo "Le cinéma est encore mort ! Un média et ses crises identitaires…", in *Écrans et médias*, de *MEI Média et information* (rivista internazionale di comunicazione), n. 35, dicembre 2011.

[6] *Ibidem.*

[7] Manifesto che fa parte della collezione personale degli autori. Questo manifesto non è libero da diritti e dunque non è archiviato su internet.

[8] Il 18 octobre 2010, su France 2. Si veda: http://culturebox.france3.fr/all/28291/cendrillon-de-rudolf-noureev-le-18-octobre-sur-france-2 (ultima consultazione: 5 ottobre 2011).

[9] Christophe Huss, "Le Metropolitan Opera au cinéma. Pour les yeux d'Elina", in *Le Devoir*, 18 gennaio 2010.

[10] Christophe Huss, "Votre cinéma n'est pas un cinéma. Retransmissions en direct des représentations : le directeur général a fait entrer le Met dans une nouvelle ère", in *Le Devoir*, 17 décembre 2007.

[11] *Ibidem.*

[12] Christophe Huss, "Metropolitan Opera. La damnation de Lepage : un échec affligeant", in *Le Devoir*, 24 novembre 2008.

[13] Ricciotto Canudo, "Lettere d'arte. Trionfo del cinematografo", in *Il Nuovo giornale*, Firenze, 25 novembre 1908, apparso in francese in *L'Usine aux images*, edizione integrale curata da Jean-Paul Morel, Seguier/Arte, 1995, pp. 23-31 (pagina 27 per il passaggio considerato). Corsivi dell'autore.

[14] Convegno internazionale *Film Style*, Università degli Studi di Udine, 2006. Apparso in inglese nel 2010: André Gaudreault, Philippe Marion, "The Mysterious Affair of Styles in the Age of Kine-Attractography", in *Early Popular Visual Culture*, vol. 8, no. 1, février 2010, pp. 17-30.

[15] Il neologismo "*sursomption*" è stato suggerito da Y. Gauthier. "Proponiamo – scrive lo studioso – 'sursumer' e 'sursomption' per '*Aufheben*' e '*Aufhebung*'. La derivazione etimologica si appoggia sul modello "assumere - assunzione". La semantica della parola corrisponde all'antinomo di 'subsomption' che troviamo in Kant. La sursomption definisce dunque un'operazione contraria a quella della subsomption, che consiste nel porre la parte nel o sotto la totalità; la *sursomption*, l''*Aufhebung*', designa il processo della totalizzazione della parte. Si veda "Logique hégélienne et formalisation", in *Dialogue, Revue canadienne de philosophie*, settembre 1967, p. 152, note 5). http://id.erudit.org/iderudit/203131ar, ultima consultazione: 18 Marzo 2011.

[16] Così come annuncia l'invito alle prime proiezioni pubbliche a pagamento del Cinematografo Lumièere nel dicembre 1895, al salone indiano del Grand Café a Parigi.

[17] André Malraux, *Esquisse d'une psychologie du cinéma*, Nouveau Monde Éditions, Paris 2003, pp. 42-45. Apparso inizialmente in *Revue Verve*, n° 8, 1940.

[18] Christophe Huss, "Musique classique. *Salomé* ouvre la saison du Met dans les cinémas", in *Le Devoir*, 11-12, ottobre 2008.

[19] Christophe Huss, "Metropolitan Opera. La damnation de Lepage : un échec affligeant", cit.

[20] Si veda "Le cinéma est encore mort ! Un média et ses crises identitaires… ", in pubblicazione su *MEI Média et information*, dicembre 2011 (cfr. nota 5, più sopra).

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An Archive of Appearing Jean-Luc Godard, Bill Viola, Wang Qingsong

> *Letters that are not mailed cease to be missives for possible friends; they turn into archived things...*
> *Everything suggests that the archivists have become the successors of the humanists.*
> Peter Sloterdijk, *Rules for the Human Zoo: a Response to the* Letter on Humanism, 2001

My talk will be, for the most part, a contextualization rather than a reading or an interpretation. In a broad sense, I will only be retracing a path opened up initially by Jacques Derrida and recently re-launched by Bernard Stiegler. That is, the simultaneous impossibility and necessity of opposing living memory to dead memory, *anamnesis* to *hypomnesis*. Since every archive constitutes an exteriorization, the only living memory, as it were, is the one consistently threatened and exposed to its own death, its own expropriation and erasure, or, as we read in Godard's *Histoire(s) du Cinema*: "Only the hand that erases can write." Stiegler has placed this crucial deconstructive *topos* under the heading not of grammatology, but "grammatization," so that hypomnesic exposure becomes the precondition for the "discretizations" and hence incorporations into apparatuses, of forms of thinking, of gestures, of feelings, even, of what he refers to as noetic, gestural and aesthetic *pharmakoi*.[1] This leads Stiegler to propose what he calls a general "organology," that is, an articulation of bodily (brain, hands, eyes, genitals, etc.), artificial (technics orthographical, mechanical, audio-visual, etc.) and social (familial, ethnic, political, geographical, organizational) organs with a view toward an analysis and contestation of what he takes to be a general "proletarianization," "induced by the spread of hypomnesic technologies," in which he recognizes a catastrophe in and of forms of doing, living and knowing. The artists about whom I will speak engage this general situation, although in a slightly displaced context. That said, all three engage – and create – what Stiegler calls "tertiary retentions," temporal objects through which the work and forms of memory pass beyond the opposition of living and dead, and through which hypomnesic exposure forms the condition of anamnesic ex-istence, if it can be put that way. Three forms of temporal *ecstasis*, in an age dedicated, as Lyotard noted, to speed, to both saving and killing time. So I will set out that context and then quickly situate some works by Godard, Viola and Wang within it.

Our age is no doubt suffering a crisis of memory as profound as those preceding crises which attended similar shifts, radical and over-determined, of what Bernard Stiegler has called, following Nietzsche in *The Genealogy of Morals*, "mnemotechnics."

Symptomatically, at least in the parts of the world we continue to characterize as "developed," the seemingly total recall of networked data banks competes with the total amnesia of a growing population of Alzheimer's sufferers. The passion, and pathos, of remembering, then, conjoins with its own oblivion, which, if not unheard of, is novel in its speed, breadth and saturation. Between memory and its forgetting, then, lie all the shifting and precarious forms of affiliation and dis-affiliation that are coming to characterize the appearing, or dis-appearing, of humans to one another, that is, to use a Heideggerian word which remains unexhausted, their "dwelling." Thus a problematic that is being posed simultaneously on the side of the most radical arte-factuality, and on the other, of the most radical biology.

What is brought into focus here is a kind of dialectical play between the very big and the very small, between what we call globalization and the miniaturization upon which it depends, which is also a play between registration and erasure, a kind of inverse ratio between archival capacity and meaninglessness. Thus the universal extension of the commodity form, with all the numerical equivalences it entails, finds not only its ideological double, but its intimate extension in cognitive neuroscience.

Within this context the work of Catherine Malabou is perhaps especially important, since she brings out precisely the political and discursive stakes of the dual unfolding of digital and neural networks without abandoning a real reference to contemporary neuroscience. Thus, in a powerful critique of the collapsing of the distinctions between neuroscience and social management in the representation of Alzheimer's disease she writes:

> *An Alzheimer's patient is the nemesis of connectionist society […] disaffiliated, errant, without memory. […] One observes in his brain a thinning of connections, the accumulation of fibrils inside neurons, the presence of senile plaques – all factors contributing to rigidification and loss of suppleness, which, paradoxically, lead to chaotic wandering […].*

But this is also "the image constructed of the homeless, of illegal immigrants, of the unemployed."[2] "It is no longer possible to distinguish rigorously on an ideological level," Malabou writes, "between those suffering a neurodegenerative disorder and those with major social handicaps." Memory then, phrased precisely as a question of integration and affiliation, of connections, is always a double reference. If one can speak of it as a vital need, that is because it subtends both a *phusis* and a *techne*, a nature and a technics, indeed their ongoing and increasing indiscernibility. Against the sclerotic collapse of memory, then, is posed the flexible and continuous extension of connections. But connectivity is not, or at least not exactly, memory. Indeed the connectionist imperative may be as fatal to memory as its sclerotic double.

What Malabou reminds us, then, is that any vision of the brain, indeed any account of memory, "is necessarily political." And the connectionist imperative functions at a macro level in the way the stimulation of neurochemical transmissions by antidepressants functions at the micro level. There are, of course, good reasons to balk at both. And indeed, in what will no doubt turn out to be another case of too little, too late, it was recently reported that the European Union will seek to enshrine a "right to be forgotten" in law, giving Europeans, in the words of EU Justice Commissioner Viviane Reding, "the right to withdraw their consent to data processing."[3]

At the same time, a rather more obscure "right to be remembered" continues to animate a panoply of political struggles the origins of which are far, far older than, say, Google or Facebook. In a strange renewal of the dialectics of *lethe* and *a-letheia*, then, a struggle takes shape around multiple forms of amnesia, the great spellbinding figure of cinema itself.

Here it is perhaps appropriate to recall the figure of Aby Warburg, who himself lived through a crisis of memory – from the disappearing indigenous peoples of North America, whose vanishing rituals he photographed, to the anguish of Binswanger's clinic in Kreuzlingen, where he struggled with manic-depression, not to mention the full efflorescence of technological media – with all that this made possible for *Kulturswissenschaft* even as the war machine these selfsame technologies underwrote imperiled it. The name, *Mnemosyne*, that he gave not only to his monumental "art history without words," but to the library that remains so fully a part of his enduring legacy, his *Nachleben*, or afterlife, like the famous *Pathosformel*, responded to exigencies both arti-factual and biological, iconographic and emotional. If Giorgio Agamben is correct in his assessment that Warburg's research directed itself not so much to the artwork as to the image or even the gesture as its essential component, then the conceptual armature Warburg constructed to make sense of the archive he himself was constructing – the Atlas, the Pathos Formula, the Afterlife – was directed not at the construction of a new art history so much as an experiment with the inter-mediation or interval, the *Zwischenraum* across which human co-appearing could only take place (for Agamben this is the radical question of the "rupture of subjectivity" itself).[4] In this respect, what the pathos formula – always an image of movement, poised between, in Warburg's words, "passionate surrender" and "detached serenity" – instantiates is not so much a traumatic encounter but the plastic elements of a dialogue in which the energies and forces of that encounter can be inherited, adopted and transformed. It functions then as a kind of mobile memory object, precisely in ways the formal, linguistic categories of subjectivity, say analyzed by Emile Benveniste, enable the transformation of language into discourse. It is worthwhile remembering Warburg here, especially as his life and work have been re-visited by Agamben and Philippe-Alain Michaux, because they do help bring out certain characteristics of a contemporary archival-cinematic situation into which I will insert Godard, Viola and Wang.

We are thus witnessing a strange "archivisation" of life itself: not an archive to which one would have access, but one of or in which one would be an element or entry, as it were. And the same would go for the brain, since antidepressants precisely undermine the rupture of subjectivity by suppressing the difference and distance between myself and the archive that I am, so to speak.

In this respect, the subject is dispossessed of its own suffering, of its own access to an archive that is, in the last analysis, political. A subject, then, without a pathos formula, bereft not so much of interiority, but of an intimate exteriority as the condition for adopting and taking possession of its own, no doubt virtual and creative, and no doubt also painful, singularity. Raymond Bellour, who, in a recently translated essay on Deleuze and the brain, has poignantly brought out this tension between what Deleuze called the "objectified" and the "non-objectifiable" brain, calls this the subject's or the work of art's "writeability."[5] At play in this "writeability," then, according to Bellour, is a tension between not only these two versions of the brain, but between "real science and the impossible science of the single object," alluding here to Roland Barthes. "Writeability," then, is, I take it, a kind of shared attribute, since it would belong to an object, here a film, as a kind of virtuality, its "molecular unconscious," extended and developed in the audio-visual or purely written commentary to which it gives rise. Crucially, Bellour poses "writeability" against the "monstrous" standardization he finds in the "dogmatic application of knowledge in the cognitive sciences," inevitably attracted to Spielberg and Hollywood blockbusters.

Indeed, it is precisely under the heading of writing, of grammatization, that Bernard Stiegler phrases the contemporary scene or archivization, of the hyperindustrial exteriorization of memory. Grammatization is "the history of the exteriorization of memory in all its forms," whether that memory is nervous, muscular or even biogenetic.

As an original exteriorization and therefore "an intergenerational support of memory" that is the very pre-condition of the articulation of individual and collective time, grammatization – or "writeability" – is both the possibility of an archive but more importantly, the possibility of adopting or not adopting one. If I have referred to Warburg here, it is because the pathos formula might be said to be precisely pharmacological in Stiegler (or

Derrida's) sense, conserving as it were a tension between poison and remedy, between *hypomnesis* and *anamnesis*, between individual and trans-individual.

It is this "writeability," or a more general "figureability" or pharmacological program of what I call, simply, appearance, that are at stake in the three artists to whom I will now, finally, quickly turn, if only to bring out their resemblances and differences, but also their common ground, despite being from three different generations and three different continents. Indeed, these selfsame temporal and geographical distances only make more important and precise their possibilities of communicating one with the other. That all three turn to the history of European painting in works that address and function as archives was my original inspiration for their comparison and, of course, for my reference to Warburg. In Wang, some of Warburg's dearest images are photographically restaged and displaced; in Viola, the pathos formula is literally put into motion, explosively and ecstatically; in Godard these images stage a kind of resurrection, in which the indiscernibility of dead and living memory give rise to a form of public dreaming.

Wang Qingsong (b. 1966) is a Chinese photographer, sculptor and filmmaker. His two monumental, panoramic photos, *China Mansion* and *Romantique* date from 2003.[6] Both were filmed at the Beijing Movie Studios, slated at the time for demolition and now gone in the wake of the massive real estate development taking place across China. The studios were quite famous, not least of which because they were the location for the shooting of the film versions of the revolutionary model operas of the Cultural Revolution, but in more recent times of more ambiguous cultural exports or co-productions, like *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* or *Kill Bill*.

Indeed, I would call attention here to a certain play of projection, both temporal and geographical, to what was then an incipient but now an accomplished disappearance. If, then, Jean-Michel Frodon and Stiegler after him, can speak of an American "national projection," of a national cinematic birth predicated on the eradication and disappearance of its original inhabitants, Wang's photos imply a form of global projection, with birth, of a certain kind, central to *Romantique*. Central and peripheral, in fact, since on the far right you will find a family with the father holding a young child, the offspring of a marriage or liaison of East and West.

That these photos depend upon multiple forms or techniques of archivisation will, I suspect, be pretty evident. But what I want to stress here is the status of these photographs as what Stiegler calls "temporal objects," with all of the retentions and protentions implied in this status.

So there is a dialectic here, between appearance and disappearance, between a becoming-Western and a becoming-Asian, between a becoming representation and becoming flesh. Thus the stark and indeed weighty presence of naked Chinese bodies is only highlighted by being enfolded in the poses of Botticelli, Ingres, Courbet, Manet, Man Ray, Leonardo, etc. Cleary then the photos are both critical and, in a way, utopian. It is as if two histories, two traditions (and more than two, really) face their simultaneous forgetting and remembering. China appears by means of painting, the latter by means of the former. So if there is a denunciation here, it is of the globalization working precisely against the very "writeablity" of the works. On the other hand, the forms – or formulas – which include not only western paintings but Buddhas and traditional animal symbols, create precisely the archival repertoire a subject (of photography) transforms precisely into a discourse.

Bill Viola (b. 1951) gives us another temporal object and another passage through painting. A literal chrono-photograph (or anti-chrono-photograph), Viola deploys immense speeds (of film) in order to produce a slowness that revives and restores a ruined, archival gestural sphere.[7] Like Wang, this is not so much an allusion to a painting (Bosch's *Christ Mocked with the Crown of Thorns*) but a way for an ensemble of bodies to inhabit one. Thus, the almost pneumatic sense of energy passing across and among the figures has the effect of reanimating not so much the bodies themselves, but the gestures that constitute their co-appearing, their very being in a medium, in an art of intervals. Here *hypomnesia*, the exteriorization of gestural energy becomes the very condition of the living, anamesic memory of a revivified gestural commerce. High-technological speeds, then, are used against themselves, the grammatization of high definition gives way to the "long circuits" of gestural memory, the great medical and forensic archives of expression – of finite objectification – are exposed to the "infinitization" of a libidinal, mnemo-economy or pharmacology. And Wang's photographs work that way too, with high technology turned not towards discretization but "panoramization," a release of time, appearance and memory.

Jean-Luc Godard (b. 1931) is of course the most complicated case. Clearly Godard's cinema has been, almost from its beginning, a kind of passage through painting, even if this only became very obvious in the period after *Sauve qui peut (La Vie), Passion*, etc. But Godard has always been the most writerly of filmmakers – and the noisiest too – as if the imaginary, symbolic and real simply staged their refusal to knot themselves together across his work. Here I just want to emphasize just a small dimension of the writerly/pharmacological dimension of the *Histoire(s)* as the work of the dreamer who upon awaking finds his oneiric flower in his hands, as the *Histoire(s)*'s lyrical ending phrases it.

Histoire(s) du Cinema might be understood as a dream and according to a classical dream logic, which is in fact how the series begins and end – a dream as, if I may put it this way, "*gai savoir*," as those flowers or *Flors del Gay Saber* of which Godard's cinema signals itself as inheritor. Perhaps there is nothing so fragile today as the dream and its "writeability," threatened as it is with its consignment to a pre-Freudian night, either as simple neuro-physiological effect or illusion, or the renewed site of superstitious reverence. But Godard's dream-history-cinema maintains, indeed, insists upon this "writeability," this hypomnesic anamnesis, so to speak. "*Père, ne vois-tu pas que je brûle ?*," "Father, can't you see?" This is how Godard introduces his films; and this is of course the dream that introduces the final chapter of *The Interpretation of Dreams*. The burning question, as Lacan had noted, of Freudian theorization.

Let me look quickly at the play of this "*gai savoir*" or what, thirty years ago, the then Marie-Claire Ropars (as she signed her name) characterized as an "erratic alphabet" or "cinescripture," a "writeability," precisely.[8] So, if chapters *1a* and *1b*, among other things, pose explicitly the question of vision: as hypomnesically and historically constituted across a series of temporal objects from painting to zoetrope to photography, nickelodeon, cinema and video, they also propose these image-objects as the plastic elements of a discourse, a "*gai savoir*," that adopts and transforms these selfsame objects.

Thus, nearly from the *Histoire(s)*'s beginning, Nicholas Ray and Erich Von Stroheim appear not only as figures in a conventional, auteurist history, but precisely via the one's eye-patch and the other's monocle. Thus is born, prosthetically and *par ou en defaut*, a double series passing through the images: vision, on the one hand, here monocular, and the nuclear or annular form of the lens or eye-patch, an *O* (echoed graphically and vocally in Godard's plaintive, "*Oh Temps !*") or Zero, *0*. So if the authorial series then passes through Vigo, it is in part because of the final vowel of his name, which will lead to his film, *Zéro de Conduite*, to Rossellini's *Germania Anno 0*, and finally to the Japanese Zero, at which point these figures take flight. And this flight takes wing, as it were, in the progressive angelic figures that populate these chapters, including Otto Preminger's *Fallen Angels*, where the doubled *O*'s of the *O-teur's* name form the alar structure of the angelic image; but also the aqueous and suspended figure of Dita Parl*o* (from Vigo's film) or the fractured, specular figure of Rita Hayworth, née Casin*o*, as Godard reminds us. And we could even add the anal-annular figures of Ophuls (*L'Ecole des femmes*) and of France "taken from behind" (*prendre derrière*). (Here, although I won't pursue it, we should recall Godard's mother, Odile Monod, whose name condenses so much of what is adduced here.)

This kind of scansion, this "writeability," can be extended in nearly infinite ways, but here I'm stressing exactly this writing or figuration in which each image, each word or sound, indeed each letter, figures as a pathos formula through which a subject appears (to another) within the very medium that might annul or nullify it –

as the image from Buñuel and Dalì's *Un chien Andalou*, in chapter *1b*, announces as part of the same series. Thus, from the interrogative, Freudian "father can't you see?" of *1a* to the constative, Cartesian "*video ergo sum*" of *1b*, the play or series of fathers, sons, brothers and "young girls in flowers" leads through the "*pères fondateurs et fils uniques*" toward a healing Christ and the Lord/Father's prayer. Eisenstein's lions rise from their pedestals and lions and owls blink and squint at MGM.

So there is here a kind of resurrection (as Godard insists a propos of the image in general), of taking wing or flight in which, in a kind of surrealist dream (Ernst) – but also the dream of Viola and Wang – the images of hysterics from the photo-archives of *La Saltpetrière* or the chronophotographic animals of Marey's locomotion studies, caught in their annular cages, endlessly repeating dead gestures, leap out of their optical prisons and reanimate a dead time, memory or history, turn it into, like the *O* of *Ordet* or Ophuls, a letter.

To conclude (with what would amount, in a longer essay, to a new beginning): what the practices of Godard, Viola and Wang point toward, via their archival work and play, are less forms of art, perhaps, than a new and renewed humanities – one that poses the question of history and memory, of its own archive, with the force of new techniques.

What is at stake – against abject "proletarianization" – is a world-cultural heritage and the ability of, finally, young people, to adopt it, to have it and have at it, and at those who would deprive them of it because, as we hear every day, we can no longer afford it. If, as Godard remarked to Colin McCabe, the *Histiore(s)* is a "letter to 100,000 friends," it is also a response to the situation Sloterdijk expresses in my epigraph: so that archived things will have become temporal objects, new letters for possible friends.[9]

Notes

[1] Bernard Stiegler, *For a New Critique of Political Economy*, Polity Press, Cambridge 2010.

[2] Catherine Malabou, *What Should We Do with Our Brains?*, Fordham University Press, New York 2008, p. 52.

[3] Matt Warman, "Websites will have to delete personal data," in *The Daily Telegraph*, March 18, 2011, p. 13.

[4] Giorgio Agamben, *Aby Warburg and the Nameless Science*, in Id., *Potentialities*, Stanford University Press, Stanford 1999, pp. 89-103.

[5] Raymond Bellour, "Deleuze: The thinking of the Brain," in *Cinema: Journal of Philosophy and the Moving Image*, no. 1, 2010, pp. 81-94.

[6] http://www.wangqingsong.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=12&Itemid=15&lang=en, last access December 2011.

[7] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MR9av-I35ME, last access December 2011.

[8] Marie-Claire Ropars, "The Graphic in Filmic Writing: *A Bout de Souffle*, or The Erratic Alphabet," in *Enclitic 5-6*, 1982, pp. 147-161.

[9] Peter Sloterdijk, "Rules for the Human Zoo: a Response to the *Letter on Humanism*," *Environment and Planning D Journal*, Society and Space, vol. 27, 2009, pp. 12-28. "Books, as the poet Jean Paul once remarked, are thick letters to friends. With this phrase, he aptly articulated the quintessential nature and function of humanism: it is telecommunication in the medium of print to underwrite friendship."

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Still Here, Here Again - Farocki, Godard and the Cinema's Centenary

1995 marked the one hundred years of cinema. The centenary was a banal occasion for theorists and practitioners of the visual to re-think the cinema within a rapidly changing mediascape. Film scholar and filmmaker Laura Mulvey has affirmed that in the midst of all the celebrations "suddenly, the cinema seemed to age."[1] This anthropomorphic diagnosis of the ageing of cinema was interpreted at least in three different ways. One could argue that these three interpretations, or verdicts, continue to haunt us.

One interpretation idealizes a youthful past of the cinema when "there were new masterpieces every month," as Susan Sontag claims in her essay "The Decay of the Cinema." The logic behind this nostalgic view is clear: it serves to better criticize and confirm the present decay of the cinema, its "irreversible decline."[2]

Another type of verdict simply certifies cinema's imminent death in the wake of a multi-coloured digital dawn. For new media scholar Lev Manovich, the development of digital technologies has provoked a "crisis of cinema's identity."[3] This crisis entails that "cinema can no longer be distinguished from animation." Cinema is to become, in his words, "a sub-genre of painting."[4]

A third kind of response re-evaluates the ageing powers of cinema and gives critical import to characteristics commonly associated with old age: slowness, experience, and wisdom. Laura Mulvey emphasizes the critical significance of these characteristics in the context of the speeding up of post-fordist capitalism. She understands that:

> *The question of how history acquires pattern and shape has political significance and the rush of new technology towards the future, its indifference to the past, may fall into step with the new conservatism. In this context, the cinema, rather than simply reaching the end of its era, can come to embody a new compulsion to look backwards, to pause and make a gesture to delay the combined forces of politics, economics and technology.*[5]

Various filmmakers developed in these years, the nineties, a series of projects that can be read as different versions of this counter-compulsion to rhythm, pause, freeze images and to re-think the powers of cinema by looking back to its centenary archive.

It is two of these rhythms, Harun Farocki's *Workers Leaving the Factory* (1996) and Jean-Luc Godard's *Histoire(s) du Cinéma* (1988-1998), that I compare and distinguish here. Both films look back at the history of cinema since its inception. They both re-work, re-rhythm, re-activate its archive. The operations at work in these films, as well as their similarities, their complementarities and differences, raise questions and reveal fields of possibilities that are essential for the continuation and transformation of a critical practice of cinema today. I examine these films and how they operate as powerful devices to affirm the art of cinema is still here but also here again.

A Tribunal in Reverse

The two films confront the one hundred years of cinema head on. Godard and Farocki situate the cinema in their films *devant le tribunal de l'histoire*. Generally speaking, the two films develop a similar *dispositif* that resembles a trial, a court hearing, to judge the cinema. Both films can be understood as audio-visual tribunals where the cinema faces the tribunal of History, of its history and of its stories. The first point to emphasize here is that Godard and Farocki do not shy away from this power of prosecution – they fully embrace it. Their films operate against the consensus of postmodern elusiveness.

In the cinematic tribunals Farocki and Godard establish, films are found, from the first image, absolutely guilty. The cinema is guilty because it has failed in making present one specific place, the place of the twentieth century. For Godard, this place is the extermination camps of World War II. For Farocki, this place is the factory.

For Godard, cinema has failed to see and show the camps. This failure challenges the power of the image, including its omniscient capabilities. If the cinema did not show the camps, it is because cinema had already relinquished its powers to make the world visible. The cinema had sold its soul to the devil, to the Hollywood-Mosfilm fiction industry, to the "cosmetic industry," to the "industry of death." Godard understands that the failure of cinema in relation to the death camp is double: it has not filmed the horror of the camps, but it has also failed because it did not recognize that it had already shown, in its fictions, this horror. The cinema was unable to recognize in the real world what it had pre-figured in its fictions: for example, in the rabbit hunt in Jean Renoir's *Rules of the Game* (1939), or in the concentration camp in Charlie Chaplin's *The Great Dictator* (1940).[6]

It is worth noting that *Histoire(s) du Cinéma* repeatedly attributes a strange power of pre-figuration to the image, like the images of war by Francisco Goya we repeatedly see throughout the film that seem to pre-figure the disasters of the twentieth-century. This power of pre-figuration challenges the conventional use of the image to organize a unified, linear time.

For Farocki, cinema has failed to make visible and present in our mediascape the spatial protagonist of politics in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It has failed in its function of recording and revealing the site of the factory. The voice-over of *Workers Leaving the Factory* affirms that "the cinema is repelled by the factory." Farocki further argues:

> *Films about work and workers have not emerged as one of the main film genres, and the space of the factory has remained on the sidelines. Most narrative films take place in that part of life where work has been left behind. [...] Over the last*

> *century virtually none of the communication that took place in factories, whether through words, glances or gestures was recorded on film.*[7]

"Factory" is a name without a cinematic scene; documentary or narrative. This failure to film the factory implies that cinema has effectively contributed to make it invisible and to erase it from the spectators' memories.

Workers Leaving the Factory repeatedly verifies this verdict. It uses indiscriminately a sequence from Fritz Lang's *Clash by Night* (1952), where Marilyn Monroe walks out of a fish cannery after a day's work; the silent images of strikers outside their workplace in Vsevolod Pudovkin's *The Deserter* (1933); or the sequence of an alienated Monica Vitti wandering around the murky industrial area of Ravenna in Michelangelo Antonioni's *Deserto Rosso* (1964). Cinema's structural negation of the factory as re-presentable makes evident that the Hollywood-Mosfilm-Cinecittà complex is perfectly tuned to the dominant regime of the visible, where, to use Godard's words, "the exploiter doesn't show the exploitation of the exploited." For this reason Farocki speaks, without ceremony, of "the ignominy of cinema."[8]

Starting with a condemnation, Farocki's and Godard's films conduct a very strange trial. These films are trials that work backwards. Both films start with the final verdict, with the condemnation of cinema. These strange tribunals do not try so much to demonstrate or convince us of the cinema's culpability. The cinema is condemned before any deliberation, beyond any argumentation, absolutely condemned, from the beginning, from its first image, without extenuating circumstances.

However, this initial, absolute condemnation is not incapacitating, but transforms these films into occasions to re-do, to re-think the capacities of the condemned cinema. Here, absolute condemnation is therefore empowering. In the case of *Histoire(s) du Cinéma*, the condemnation is redemptive: the images of the absolutely guilty art of cinema, an art that has done everything to be guilty, are ultimately revealed as absolutely innocent. In the case of *Workers Leaving the Factory*, the condemnation is pedagogical: the prosecution of the cinema teaches us how to see again the images of cinema's ignominious history.

Let's address now the different logics and powers of the redemptive image and the educational image Godard and Farocki propose.

The Education Image

According to Antje Ehmann and Kodwo Eshun:

> *The education image is the ultimate bad object of the contemporary art world; to say an image is didactic or pedagogic is the worst thing you can say; much worse than stating that an image is pornographic. This verdict is reversed in the work of Harun Farocki.*[9]

In *Workers Leaving the Factory*, Farocki assumes a cinematic-archivist approach to study sets of images with a common motif, in this case the "workers leaving the factory" motif. His intention with his archeological films is to construct an "imaginary archive" that reorganises existing visual materials to make them visible once again.[10] Farocki focuses his research on the familiarity of well-known motifs. His re-vision is not only concerned with old images but particularly with *blind* images and motifs, with images we know so well we do not see. In *Workers Leaving the Factory* Farocki dusts well-known images, the inaugural sequence of cinema, the homonymous Lumière Brothers' film. Farocki's film makes these images visible not as the honourable origin of cinema but rather as the early, the earliest possible, visualisation of the thwarted relations between the cinema and the factory. Farocki learns, and makes the spectator learn with him, to see these images as an inaugural fiasco regarding cinema's participation in the visibility of the factory. Furthermore, for him these images inaugurate cinema's connivance with surveillance and military discipline.[11]

Cinema's repulsion for the factory is not so much argued in *Workers Leaving the Factory* but *essayistically* revealed. The film develops an essayistic format that does not simply legitimate Farocki's deductions; rather it transforms the screen into an editing table – where the spectator is invited to participate. The screen becomes a school blackboard, where we are able to compare, put together and separate images and words.

To transform the screen into an editing table and elicit the spectators' participation, Farocki develops, among other strategies, what we can call a "militant hyperbolism." Farocki's cinema texts make the hyperbolic, exaggerations, function not simply as deviations from the norm but as a device to generate the conditions for criticality. As he admits in an interview:

> *I always try to avoid interpretations where the film dissolves without leaving a residue. One of my strategies is to overinterpret or even misinterpret a film. [...] There is always a reading of the images, sometimes a provocative reading, where the audience will wonder, surely, this can't be the right commentary to these images.*[12]

The powerful commentary in the film breaks with the moderate, balanced, respectable equilibrium of *good* argumentation, of the *good* essay. The commentary is not only a provocation, but also it contributes to the construction of an improper force field, the screen, where the spectators are able to participate in the image-word relation and the production of signification.

Through a participatory pedagogy of the image, *Workers Leaving the Factory* does not simply confirm its verdict: it does not simply teach that cinema is a disciplinary factory of control. Primarily, it makes visible an anonymous capacity to intertwine different registers, re-organise images and words, as well as invent conclusions. To compare, to exaggerate, to re-group, to comment, to silence, to poeticize are operations constructing a singular audio-visual conjunction to reveal the invisibility of the factory; a conjunction visualising the anonymous possibilities of any intelligence to essay.

The Redemptive Image

To address Godard's redemptive image, I will start from the interpretation Jacques Rancière has developed of *Histoire(s) du Cinéma*, mainly in his text *The Saint and the Heiress*.[13] For Rancière, there is in the film a new spiritualism, a new sacralization of the image. Rancière does not simply argue against this sacralization, as one could expect, but finds critical significance in it.

Rancière believes that *Histoire(s)* reverses the contemporary dogma that understands the cinema screen is the site of the spectacle, of the simulacrum (the postmodern dogma). The screen for Godard is very different from Farocki's blackboard. For Godard the screen is the Veronica's veil "stretched out so that the world itself imprints itself there."[14] According to Rancière, Godard dusts cinema images to redeem them and visualise "their icon quality, their primordial virginity, their own splendor."[15] Godard, "the most rigorous servant of the icon" says Rancière, fragments, cuts, slows down, freezes cinema frames to make each shot visible as an incandescent, raw material where the history of the XXth century is inscribed. *Histoire(s) du Cinéma* constructs images as the site, or better, as the flesh of this history.

The icons proper to cinema are images that outlive the forgetting of the histories/stories they are part of. Godard thinks of icons such as the glass of milk in Alfred Hitchcock's *Suspicion* (1941): we remember the glass of milk, not the story it is part of. This capacity of the image to "shine with its own light" and to isolate itself from the history/story empowers and condemns cinema in its relation to the historical world. The cinema icon is prior to cinema's narratives, "like the divine image is prior to human representations."[16] For Rancière, the abundance of references from the history of painting in *Histoire(s) du Cinéma*, from Giotto to Picasso, guarantees the power of a self-sufficient presence that consecrates the power of the cinema image as icon.

Rancière ultimately believes that Godard renews a paradox of our age in *Histoire(s)*: on the one hand, the film affirms the radical immanence of thought in the materiality of forms; the cinema icon is affirmed as an unmanipulated presence. On the other hand, the film multiplies to infinity the games of the word, of the poem. The icon is multiplied, polyvalent, the film is an ode the to force of editing, writing. But Rancière's interpretation of *Histoire(s)* requires further commentary.

Histoire(s) recuperates, reclaims, or renews a sense of wonder in the cinema, Rancière understands this sense of wonder as a spiritual matter. However, in a more prosaic vein, one could argue that Godard tries to recuperate the sense of wonder that a nineteenth-century spectator would feel when watching one of Georges Méliès' films, as well as other magic acts. If Farocki looks back at the Lumière Brothers, Godard goes back to Meliès, to the magician, to the grandfather of special effects. The spirituality of *Histoire(s)* is therefore not purely canonical but an improper spirituality that brings together Christian iconography and themes with the tricks of the enchanter, illusionist, or sorcerer-filmmaker. The film ultimately affirms the spiritualism of cinema as an absolutely impure affair.

Histoire(s) is constructed with Méliès' superimposition technique. Godard looks back at cinema's infancy to see its old archive with infant eyes. The superimpositions Godard constructs are insufficiently taken into account in Rancière's reading. Superimposition makes heterogeneous images co-exist. In Rancière's reading this co-presence is essentially submitted to the logic of the icon, to the weight of the concept that dominates his interpretation. However, instead of an icon of presence, we could think that in *Histoire(s)* there is a practice of the image as a paradoxical icon of co-presence. It is paradoxical because co-presence invalidates the logic of the icon as unique presence. These impure icons of co-presence define the cadence of *Histoire(s)*.

In Chapter 6 of *Histoire(s)*, we can read a political and aesthetical statement about this co-presence strategy: "to bring things together which have never been brought together, to bring things together which did not seem to be able to go together."[17] It is this politics of compatibility, of generating a consistency between incompatibles, which makes all the force of *Histoire(s)*.

To conclude I would like to summarize three main points that this very brief comparative analysis has raised. These three points, moreover, are engaged in an emancipatory practice of the archive:

(1) *Workers Leaving the Factory* and *Histoire(s) du Cinéma* share an untimely force that not only goes against the consensus on the state of the cinema (its decline), but also against the consensus on the state of the present (what is present, what is past, etc). In this sense, these films reaffirm cinema's untimely capacities to intervene in the visual regime of the present;

(2) Farocki's film re-articulates the question of the education image. An education image that does not simply reveals the truth behind the ideological uses of the image, but an education image that transforms the screen into a venue for participation;

(3) Godard's develops a politics of consistency in *Histoire(s)* that needs to be further interrogated. This question of *bringing together* marks an essential shift in contemporary visual politics: from a visual politics based on separation, to a visual politics based on the construction of a common.

The discussion of these three questions is necessary to understand and contribute to the development of an emancipatory practice of cinema today.

Notes

[1] Laura Mulvey, *Death 24x a Second, Stillness and the Moving Image*, Reaktion, London 2006, p. 17.

[2] Susan Sontag, "The Decay of Cinema," in *The New York Times*, February 25, 1996.

[3] Lev Manovich, *What is Digital Cinema?*, in Peter Lunenfeld (ed.), *The Digital Dialectic: New Essays on New Media*, MIT, London-Cambridge, MA 2000, p. 175.

[4] *Ibidem.*

[5] Laura Mulvey, *Death 24x a Second, Stillness and the Moving Image*, cit., p. 24.

[6] See Jacques Rancière, "The Saint and the Heiress," trans. by Timothy S. Murphy, in *Discourse*, n. 24-1, 2002, pp. 113-119.

[7] Harun Farocki, *Workers Leaving the Factory*, in Thomas Elsaesser (ed.), *Harun Farocki, Working on the Sight-lines*, Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam 2004, p. 273.

[8] *Ibidem.*

[9] Antje Ehmann, Kodwo Eshun, *A to Z of HF or: 26 introductions to HF*, in Antje Ehmann, Kodwo Eshun (ed.), *Harun Farocki: Against What? Against Whom?*, Konig Books & Raven Row, London 2009, p. 206.

[10] See Thomas Elsaesser (ed.), *Harun Farocki, Working on the Sight-lines*, cit., pp. 273-276.

[11] Here I am rephrasing Alain Badiou's sentence: "All contemporary politics has the factory as its place," in Alain Badiou, *Abrégé de Métapolitique*, Seuil, Paris 1998, p. 59.

[12] Thomas Elsaesser (ed.), *Harun Farocki, Working on the Sight-lines*, cit., p. 187.

[13] Jacques Rancière, "The Saint and the Heiress," cit.

[14] *Idem*, p. 117.

[15] My translation ("*son charactère d'icône, sa virginité première et sa splendeur propre*"). Jacques Rancière, *Et tant pis pour les gens fatigués. Entretiens*, Editions Amsterdam, Paris 2009, p. 309.

[16] Jacques Rancière, "The Saint and the Heiress," trans. by Timothy S. Murphy, in *Discourse*, cit., p. 118.

[17] My translation ("*rapprocher les choses qui n'ont jamais été raprochées et ne semblaient pas disposées à l'être*").

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Seul le cinéma peut raconter l'histoire : Jean-Luc Godard, archéologue des images

Histoire(s) du Cinéma constitue un chemin à travers une mémoire singulière du cinéma, et ainsi devient une enquête sur le cinéma en tant que mémoire collective d'un siècle. Pour Godard, même dans le cas de films de fiction, le cinéma, parce qu'il enregistre ce qui se passe, est un refuge du temps, donc une métaphore de l'histoire : il montre la répétition d'images prises à un autre moment, et par conséquent, en ce sens, il devient immédiatement une archive ou « musée du réel ».[1] Toutefois, pour Godard, raconter l'histoire du cinéma et montrer / monter son rapport au « dehors », celui de l'Histoire, ne signifie pas rechercher les traces du passé et l'origine des faits mais, en puisant dans différents moments fragmentaires, s'engager dans des constructions qui, même si elles peuvent sembler gouvernées par le hasard, permettent de relever les relations essentielles qui ne sont pas immédiatement visibles.[2]

D'une part, nous examinerons ces constructions comme effet d'une méthodologie s'identifiant à un exercice de pensée critique rendue possible par les moyens du cinéma et de la vidéo. Cette pensée se constitue, selon les mots mêmes de Godard, « comme une sorte de théorème qui se présente sous une forme de puzzle : il faut chercher quelle pièce s'ajuste exactement à quelle autre. Il faut induire, tâtonner et déduire. Mais finalement, il n'y a qu'une possibilité d'ajustement, même si la découvrir demande d'essayer plusieurs combinaisons ».[3]

D'autre part, nous analyserons de quelle manière ces constructions permettent d'aborder les *Histoire(s)* de Godard en tant qu'archéologie du cinéma au sens de Foucault. En effet, les *Histoire(s)* supposent une conception de l'archive cinématographique entendue non pas comme matière inerte ou outil de reconstitution du passé, mais comme matérialité documentaire que l'on doit mettre en œuvre, développer de l'intérieur.[4] Se plaçant face à la rumeur du siècle qui le précède, Godard transforme le flux d'images et d'énoncés rassemblés en éléments d'un film qui les retravaille dans le but de produire la « fiction d'un archiviste »,[5] où le cinéma, l'histoire et la subjectivité se confondent. Finalement, nous chercherons à montrer que le geste archéologique de Godard, indissociable des constructions mentionnées dessus, présume la dissociation entre le discours et l'image comme une de ses principales procédures, servant à mettre en lumière l'histoire et les histoires piégées dans les images, et en même temps de résister contre l'utilisation des images pour illustrer les histoires ou commenter sur l'histoire, celle du cinéma et celle du siècle.

Histoire(s) du Cinéma repose principalement sur l'idée selon laquelle le cinéma aurait été un outil qui n'aurait pas su remplir ses devoirs, ceux propres à un instrument de pensée. Selon Godard, on aurait tout d'abord pensé que le cinéma s'imposerait comme un nouvel instrument de connaissance, un microscope, un télescope, mais on l'aurait très vite empêché de jouer son rôle : en raison de l'invention du parlant et de son immense succès populaire, c'est son aspect spectaculaire qui aurait été privilégié.

Or, justement dans les *Histoire(s)*, Godard convoque le cinéma en tant que sujet de sa propre histoire, en lui restituant ses puissances manquées ou ratées, celles qui lui adviennent par le montage et qui lui permettent, à lui seul, de raconter ce qu'il aurait pu être dans ce qu'il aurait été :

> *De façon frappante le film pouvait se raconter lui-même, tout autrement que les autres arts, et dans le montage seulement, il y avait une histoire ou des tentatives d'histoire qui parlaient leur propre langue. On peut mettre un Goya après un Greco, et les deux images racontent quelque chose sans nécessiter de légende.*

Dans les *Histoire(s)*, le cinéma est conçu et mis en pratique comme outil de problématisation du rapport entre la connaissance visuelle et la connaissance historique. À quel genre d'intelligibilité historique permet d'accéder le savoir visuel cinématographique et ce qui fait sa spécificité, le montage ? Une intelligibilité qui implique une redéfinition de l'activité historique elle-même.

Histoire(s) du Cinéma de Godard va à la rencontre de ce que Foucault cherchait dans *L'Archéologie du savoir* : une manière nouvelle, différente de faire de l'histoire, une histoire qui mettrait en évidence des événements sans les soumettre à la linéarité d'une narration, et qui dirait ce qui est en train de se passer en bordure de notre présent. Cette idée de bordure est importante, parce que elle permet de supposer, à la suite de ce que dit Dork Zabunyan dans *Foucault va au cinéma*, que la raison pour laquelle Foucault ne se serait pas intéressé au cinéma est justement celle qui est à la base des *Histoire(s)*.[6]

En effet, tandis que pour Foucault, l'absence d'une réflexion systématique sur l'essence du cinéma et ses formes d'existence dans les articles et textes où celui-ci est référé par l'auteur, l'époque où le cinéma se développe et conquiert son autonomie artistique ne pouvait pas encore être l'objet d'un examen archéologique, puisque nous ne disposerions alors pas de recul temporel suffisant pour décrire les archives qu'elle donne à voir et à entendre, pour Godard l'histoire du cinéma est déjà assez longue et lui autorise justement ce recul.

Les *Histoire(s)* partent non pas tant d'un constat de mort du cinéma que de la constatation de quelque chose d'achevé. Selon Foucault, une des conditions de possibilité de la démarche archéologique elle-même a à voir avec la possession par l'archiviste d'une distance adéquate, suffisamment lointaine, à l'époque qui a engendré une certaine archive, de façon à pouvoir décrire ses effets et mutations :

> *L'analyse de l'archive comporte […] une région privilégiée : à la fois proche de nous, mais différente de notre actualité, c'est la bordure du temps qui entoure notre présent, qui le surplombe et qui l'indique dans son altérité ; c'est ce qui, hors de nous, nous délimite.*[7]

C'est en ce sens que Godard est en mesure d'explorer le cinéma en mobilisant les films, mais également la peinture, les titres et les citations d'œuvres littéraires : autant d'énoncés et de visibilité à la limite de notre présent, que l'archiviste peut décrire précisément en raison de l'existence de cette bordure qui nous sépare de ce que nous ne sommes plus : « La description de l'archive déploie ses possibilités […] à partir des discours qui viennent de cesser justement d'être les nôtres ».[8] C'est parce que Godard, en fonction de la situation qui est la sienne, peut envisager (à l'aube du siècle XXI) le cinéma comme art du XIX^{ème} réalisé au XX^{ème},[9] et en même temps comme l'œil de l'histoire du XX^{ème} siècle – deux des thèses au centre des *Histoire(s)* et qui sont des articulations de la même idée, comme le rappelle Bernard Eisenschitz[10] – que les *Histoire(s)* peuvent le constituer en tant qu'archive en attente de description et rassembler dans l'expérience dont il témoigne les traits épars d'une époque : « d'une époque qui n'est plus la nôtre, ou que nous sommes en train de quitter ».[11]

C'est ainsi que dans le chapitre *2A Seul le cinéma*, lors de l'entretien avec Serge Daney, où il est justement question de l'énonciation du projet des *Histoire(s),* et de ce que signifie pour le cinéma constituer soi-même son histoire, la voix de Godard résonne comme celle d'un revenant, dans le vide et se détache de son image à l'écran ; le Godard de l'entretien est déjà passé dans l'histoire, et il se tient pourtant là comme le représentant de la Nouvelle Vague, personnifiant devant Daney la distance juste par rapport au cinéma et à la possibilité d'en faire l'histoire : « Il y a évidemment plein de raisons qui font que c'est toi qui devais la faire cette histoire », lui dit Daney. Le critique affirme justement que l'idée du cinéma comme seule façon de raconter l'histoire, dont parle Godard dans cet épisode, est indissociable de la Nouvelle Vague et du fait qu'elle s'est rendue compte, grâce au cinéma, « qu'elle était dans une histoire et a voulu savoir de quelle histoire s'agissait-t-il ». Cette prise de conscience et cette interrogation sur l'histoire ne pourraient donc se faire que par quelqu'un comme Godard, qui sait qu'il vient avant et après quelque chose. Cela renvoie déjà la Nouvelle Vague à un cinéma de cinéma (même si, à ce moment là, les jeunes turcs se préparait, guidés par Langlois, c'est-à-dire par les histoires du cinéma, à arracher le cinéma « à sa légende académique mortifère pour l'exposer aux ressources du Dehors », comme dit Badiou).[12]

La jointure privilégiée entre savoir historique et archive cinématographique mène Godard à affirmer le caractère exceptionnel de l'histoire du cinéma, la seule qui « pour se souvenir d'elle-même, peut se servir des modes de sa mémoire, de ses propres images mouvantes et sonores ». Selon Bernard Eisenschitz, Godard appelle alors l'histoire du cinéma « une véritable histoire, la seule, la vraie », parce qu'il « estime qu'il y a eu une erreur jusque là sur l'objet et l'approche. Pas qu'on a mal fait l'histoire qui a été faite, mais qu'on n'a pas fait la bonne ».[13] Si le cinéma montre le passé il doit poser la question de ses propres moyens, de ses propres méthodes. Il ne s'agit pas de faire une histoire chronologique, mais de produire de nouveaux enchaînements, qui échappent aux relations de cause à effet chronologique. Par exemple, en échappant à toute logique de causalité temporelle, dans *La Monnaie de l'absolu (3A)*, Godard nous montre le cinéma comme héritier de l'impressionnisme, de l'art moderne, nous mettant en présence de Manet, et en même temps, par la suite, en passant de Manet à Zola avec sa machine photographique, et de Nana et aux coproductions avec l'UFA, dont *Quai des brumes* (Marcel Carné, 1938) a été la dernière, aussitôt interdite par Goebbels, il nous montre le cinéma comme « instrument de pouvoir, qui mettra fin à cet art moderne à Auschwitz ».[14]

On peut dire que Godard se place du côté de la mémoire et s'éloigne de l'histoire professionnelle, entendue comme restitution d'une historicité relevant d'une explication causale des événements cinématographiques, à l'image du modèle de la fable cinématographique avec ses règles de représentation des raisons des actions, son idée de progression dramatique comme résultat de l'agencement d'actions orientées vers des fins, comme dirait Jacques Rancière. Il essaye de ressaisir le cinéma à partir de l'impossibilité de l'appréhender en tant qu'objet global, de se demander quelle histoire est possible quand son appréhension comme un tout est devenu impensable. C'est cela le sens de « toutes les histoires » : pour se donner une multiplicité d'histoires, Godard libère les images du cinéma, en même temps, soit des histoires qui les enfermaient, soit d'une histoire plus générale qui chercheraient à les subsumer à la forme cohérente de l'ensemble d'une période ou les ordonner selon une idée téléologique, une idée de changement, de devenir, entendue comme la constitution ou l'évolution d'une identité du cinéma. Dans ce cas-ci, celui de l'histoire traditionnelle, indépendamment des instances considérées – par exemple, cinéma muet, parlant, cinéma italien, néo-réalisme, nouvelle vague –, sa transformation est conçue et expliquée chornologiquement, dans le passage d'un état de choses à un autre. A l'inverse, la mémoire est constituée de processus qui échappent à toute identification ; ils impliquent une communication transversale d'éléments, volontairement et involontairement convoqués, qui forment des séries instables, où par exemple, si l'on pense aux *Histoire(s),* des extraits d'un même film peuvent revenir plusieurs fois, désignant à chaque fois des choses différentes selon les enchaînements ou associations où ils sont pris. Ce qui importe sont les relations en mutation constante, qui font à chaque fois qu'il ne soit jamais la même part des images qui revient, c'est-à-dire qui amène constamment une nouvelle part des images à la surface :

> M le Maudit (1931) *est à la fois le film de Fritz Lang, la main qui écrit, le couteau du bourreau associé à la main de Karajan et à Hitler gesticulant* (1A - Toutes les histoires*), mais ailleurs à la vérité à la portée de main, à la pensée qui doit redevenir dangereuse pour le penseur* (4A - Le Contrôle de l'univers*)*.[15]

Ce qui importe sont également les montages à distance, les corrélations entre les discontinuités sur plusieurs séries, ou la co-variation d'un ensemble de séries, empêchant l'instauration de totalités et catégories homogènes, de continuités et ruptures stables. De même, chaque série n'épuise pas l'événement qu'elle rend visible et celui-ci peut retourner sous une autre approche. Par exemple, des idées qui sont récurrentes et qui se répètent d'épisode en épisode (telle celle, mentionnée dessus, du nouveau regard cinématographique anéanti par le côté machine à rêves du cinéma, exploité soit par Hollywood, soit par les propagandes fascistes et communistes : dans l'épisode *1A*, on voit la constitution d'un parallélisme entre la puissance d'Hollywood, en tant qu'usine de rêve et le communisme, enchaînant plus tard avec un plan de Siegfried des *Nibelungen* (Fritz Lang, 1924), « qui emmène les chars allemands dans les paysages de l'impressionnisme »[16] – ce même plan apparaît aussi ailleurs, dans le même épisode, mais dans une autre association, pour signifier l'Europe écrasée par le cinéma américain), sont à chaque fois reprises à travers des séries différentes, qui à son tour se lient à d'autres séries. Le modèle de fonctionnement de la mémoire permet à Godard de composer dans les *Histoire(s)* autant de séries sensibles aux discontinuités, aux ruptures que lui permettent d'approcher tout un système de décalages dans l'archive. Elles contrarient toute linéarité dans la description des événements cinématographiques en ce qu'elles prennent davantage en compte, comme le suggère Bernard Eisenschitz, « celui qui écrit et du point d'où il écrit, du corps de son écriture », elles reposent sur la mémoire de Jean-Luc Godard et les traces que les films y ont laissées, constituant, dans les termes de Foucault, le cinéma, l'archive qui lui correspond, comme espace de dispersion. Les séries composées par Godard dans les *Histoire(s)* sont aussi des articulations, « des associations, des continuités à plusieurs voix, qui n'existent pas dans la conscience des autres » – elles sont gagnées par le travail de la pensée, à travers le montage, à l'instabilité de la mémoire, faisant écho à ses processus de répétitions, survivances, retours obsédants, oublis. « Elles sont fabriquées de toutes pièces, inventées par le regard de l'historien ».[17] C'est le sens de la phrase d'Oscar Wilde « le travail de l'historien c'est décrire ce qui n'a pas eu lieu », qui apparaît au chapitre *2A* sur des images photographiques de Godard. Ces séries témoignent donc, comme dit Jacques Rancière, d'une histoire du cinéma entendu comme puissance de faire histoire, c'est-à-dire où les images et les sons ont le pouvoir d'écrire l'histoire, en congédiant les histoires et en enchaînant directement avec le dehors. Cette puissance d'enchaînement n'est pas celle de l'homogène. C'est justement celle de l'hétérogène et elle se produit par la connexion de ce qui avait été précédemment déconnecté :[18]

> *Connecter un plan d'un film, avec le titre ou le dialogue d'un autre, une phrase de roman, le détail d'un tableau, le refrain d'une chanson, une photo d'actualité ou un message publicitaire, c'est toujours organiser un choc, une rupture, une discontinuité et en même temps construire un continuum.*[19]

De ce fait, les séries importent soit par les césures, les discontinuités, les brisures qu'elles font apparaître à l'intérieur de l'histoire ordinaire, soit par l'exhibition d'une puissance de contact entre les événements qu'elles constituent.

Selon Rancière, ces deux espaces, celui des chocs et celui du continuum, portent le même nom, celui d'histoire. L'histoire c'est alors ces deux choses contradictoires : « la ligne discontinue des chocs révélateurs ou le continuum de la coprésence. La liaison des hétérogènes construit et réfléchit en même temps un sens d'histoire qui se déplace entre ces deux pôles ».[20] Ainsi, par l'effet d'identification du cinéma avec l'histoire du XX$^{\text{ème}}$ siècle – et grâce à sa capacité d'extraire les événements hors des histoires et causalités où ils s'incarnent d'habitude, possède cette capacité de nous installer dans cet univers sans épaisseur, dans « ce brouillard sans forme », dans « ce grand murmure anonyme des discours », selon les mots de Foucault –, l'idée foucaldienne d'archive et sa description correspond dans les *Histoire(s),* à un fond disperse d'événements, difficilement visibles ; celui-ci se manifeste soit comme co-présence des images, des mots et de son entre-expression généralisée, soit comme genèse de configurations disjonctives et non encore données du voir et du dire, permettant l'émergence côte à côte de plusieurs associations et architectures exclusives, qui autorisent la transformation de notre rapport au passé, en le libérant des continuités et fonctions d'identification qui lui sont coutumières. Cela conduit à un genre de savoir qui n'est pas mesurable, insérable dans une ligne évolutive de causalité où les mutations sont des transformations prévues d'une chose dans une autre ; il est inséparable d'une conception et d'une pratique du montage entendu comme rapport triangulaire ; cela implique que, pour Godard, la collision d'un terme avec un autre n'existe pas s'il n'y a pas un troisième terme. Le montage approche deux réalités lointaines et fait naître une troisième image virtuelle de leur rencontre.

Cette troisième image, c'est en même temps le lieu du spectateur, de l'historien et de la vidéo. Pour les trois, il s'agit de savoir comment recoller les deux dimensions hétérogènes, le discours d'un coté, et les visibilités de l'autre, qui ont conquis une autonomie propre, vidés par Godard de leurs anciens rapports de référence. Or cela ne peut se faire que dans cet espace de la troisième image, ce non-lieu où les relations entre dicible et visible ne sont pas encore fixées. Alors seulement la puissance du cinéma de faire l'histoire devient possible à démontrer, car il n'y a pas de forme déjà prête pour la raconter, mais elle dépend de la rencontre des mots et des corps à travers toutes sortes d'échanges et combinaisons qu'il faut examiner avec un souci local et refaire au cas par cas.

Cependant, cela ne se fonde pas sur l'arbitraire des rapprochements, mais c'est le fruit d'un travail qui n'est pas montré, où certains problèmes à propos desquels Godard réfléchit cinématographiquement depuis longtemps, aboutissent à la surface des images et des sons, à des espèces de théorèmes, comme nous avons mentionné au début, dont les éléments peuvent nous paraître aléatoires, mais par rapport auxquels il y aurait une lecture légitime espérée.

Ainsi, il y a dans cette œuvre du sens qui peut être pénétré clairement, mais qui implique un déchiffrement qui peut être intimidant, puisque comme le montre Patrice Maniglier, dans le rapprochement qu'il établi entre le cinéma et la conception de l'histoire et des événements de Foucault, « les mots et les choses ne sont plus de simples étant passivement donnés, mais des énergies, des captures, des actions », composant des jeux de mots et des associations d'images de toutes sortes qui séparent ce qui est proche, et rapprochent ce qui est éloigné, « sans que ni l'un ni l'autre n'aient la garantie de trouver leur complémentaire ».[21]

Comme le note Alain Bergala,[22] les procédures vidéographiques explorées avec les essais en vidéo des années '70 – le découpage de l'écran et l'inscription sur lui de lettres – *Six fois deux* –, la décomposition du mouvement, les ralentis et la fixation de l'image – *France, tour, détour, deux enfants* – qui étaient à ce moment-là liés à une interrogation sur ce que fait la vidéo au cinéma, sur ce qui fait la spécificité du geste vidéographique – la surimpression et le clignotement des images, auxquels s'ajoutent d'autres expérimentations nouvelles – par exemple l'iris qui s'ouvre et se referme sur les images – deviennent dans *Histoire(s)* ce qui permet un geste méta-cinématographique et de rédemption du réel par des images du cinéma – sauver les images et les hommes victimes de l'histoire de l'oubli (Walter Benjamin).[23] La vidéo offre à Godard, par les possibilités de mixage, la liberté de complexifier l'approximation entre les plans à travers un montage vertical à l'intérieur du plan, faisant apparaître, disparaître, s'entremêler et glisser les unes sur les autres, idées, images et paroles, et permettant de vider le sens des plans de films, des photographies, des tableaux, des citations, des titres adoptés par Godard parmi les milliards qui constituent l'archive du cinéma et de l'histoire de l'art occidental pour composer toutes sortes d'associations, où le signifié des images acquiert une nouvelle consistance.

Toutefois, ce côté discursif de recherche de la clé qui permet de trouver les signifiés des liaisons des images et des paroles, doit s'harmoniser avec l'émotion et dans ce sens, il y a une autre façon de nous laisser prendre, en tant que spectateurs, par les *Histoire(s)* – une façon plus affective qui se laisse impressionner par les corps et leurs gestes, ceux adoptés par Godard, qui figurent et incarnent les passions humaines, un peu à la façon de Warburg (que dans son Atlas *Mnemosyne*, comme on le sait, mettait côté à côté des statues de l'Antiquité, des tableaux de la Renaissance, des photographies, selon une logique de montage anachronique attentive aux survivances formelles), et que nous savons reconnaître au fur et à mesure qu'ils retournent avec des variations le long des *Histoire(s)*.

La disjonction des corps et du langage, à la base des *Histoire(s),* a alors pour effet de nous rendre libres d'essayer de retrouver les lectures supposées programmées d'avance ou de nous laisser être fasciné par les images et les corps non plus comme les agents d'un discours, mais plutôt comme des supports fragiles pour l'irruption de gestes et mouvements imperceptibles et instables, enlevés à leur signification habituelle, mais aussi à leur rôle signifiant. À nouveau, c'est grâce à la vidéo, surtout par le moyen des ralentis, que Godard réussit à extraire des corps du passé du cinéma des devenirs purs, par conséquent non plus les actions d'un tout organique déjà donné, mais des actes quelconques dont l'agencement aboutit quand même à la constitution d'un corps, un corps irrésolu sur lequel ils donnent l'impression d'être précairement suspendus.

Notes

[1] L'expression est de Hans Belting dans « Histoires d'images. Entretien Hans Belting, Anne-Marie Bonnet », dans *Artpress - Le Siècle de Jean-Luc Godard. Guide pour « Histoire(s) du Cinéma »,* Hors-série, Nov. 1998, p. 68.

[2] Jean-Luc Godard, Youssef Ishaghpour, *Archéologie du cinéma et mémoire du siècle. Dialogue*, Farrago, Tours 2000, p. 43.

[3] « Lutter sur deux fronts. Entretien avec Jacques Bontemps, Jean-Louis Comolli, Michel Delahaye et Jean Narboni », dans *Cahiers du Cinéma*, nº 194, octobre 1967, repris dans Michael Witt, « Genèse d'une véritable histoire du cinéma », dans Nicole Brenez (coord.), *Jean-Luc Godard. Documents*, Éd. Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris 2006, p. 270.

[4] Michel Foucault, *L'Archéologie du savoir*, Gallimard, Paris 1969, p. 14.

[5] L'expression est empruntée à Alain Badiou qui la réfère dans « Le plus de voir. Jean-Luc Godard, Histoire(s) du Cinéma », dans *Artpress - Le Siècle de Jean-Luc Godard. Guide pour « Histoire(s) du Cinéma »*, cit., p. 86.

[6] Dork Zabunyan, « Ce que peut un film: Foucault et le savoir cinématographique », dans Patrice Maniglier, Dork Zabunyan, *Foucault va au cinéma*, Bayard Éditions, Montrouge Cedex 2011, p. 33.

[7] Michel Foucault, *L'Archéologie du savoir*, Gallimard, Paris 1969, p. 172, cité par Dork Zabunyan, « Ce que peut un film: Foucault et le savoir cinématographique », dans Patrice Maniglier, Dork Zabunyan, *Foucault va au cinéma*, cit., p. 33.

[8] Michel Foucault cité par Dork Zabunyan, *idem*, p. 34.

[9] « La seule chose qui survive à une époque telle quelle c'est la forme d'art qu'elle s'est crée ; aucune activité ne deviendra un art avant que son époque ne soit terminée ; ensuite cet art disparaît » (Hollis Frampton, 1971 – cité par Godard dans l'épisode *4B* des *Histoire(s)*).

[10] Bernard Eisenschitz, « Une machine à montrer l'invisible. Conversation avec Bernard Eisenschitz à propos des *Histoire(s) du Cinéma* », dans *Cahiers du cinéma*, n° 529, Nov. 1998, p. 53.

[11] Michel Potte-Bonneville, *Michel Foucault - l'inquiétude de l'histoire*, PUF, Paris 2004, p. 76, cité par Dork Zabunyan, « Ce que peut un film: Foucault et le savoir cinématographique », dans *Foucault va au cinéma*, cit., p. 34.

[12] Alain Badiou, « Le Plus de voir. Jean-Luc Godard, Histoire(s) du Cinéma », dans *Artpress - Le Siècle de Jean-Luc Godard. Guide pour « Histoire(s) du Cinéma »*, cit., p. 89.

[13] Bernard Eisenschitz, « Une machine à montrer l'invisible. Conversation avec Bernard Eisenschitz à propos des *Histoire(s) du Cinéma* », cit., p. 56.

[14] *Idem*, p. 53.

[15] *Idem*, p. 54.

[16] L'expression est de Jacques Rancière, cité par Bernard Eisenschitz. *Idem*, p. 53.

[17] Bernard Eisenschitz, *idem*, p. 56.

[18] Jacques Rancière, « La Phrase, l'image, l'histoire », dans *Le Destin des images*, La Fabrique éditions, Paris 2003, p. 65.

[19] *Idem*, p. 70.

[20] *Ibidem*.

[21] Patrice Maniglier, « La Métaphysique de l'événement selon Foucault éclairée par le cinéma », dans Patrice Maniglier, Dork Zabunyan, *Foucault va au cinéma*, cit., p. 99.

[22] Cf. notamment Alain Bergala, « Enfants : ralentis (*France tour détour deux enfants*) » et « L'Ange de l'histoire », dans *Nul mieux que Godard*, Cahiers du Cinéma, Paris 1999, p. 32 et p. 221.

[23] Dans la séquence de l'exposition de Godard au Beaubourg, Cyril Neyrat écrit à propos de *The old Place* en tant qu'aille ajouté aux *Histoire(s)* : « Après avoir filmé les rêves et les horreurs du XX^{e} siècle, le cinéma est devenu un 'vieil endroit' où trouvent refuge tous ceux qui 'refusent le temps, car ils ne veulent pas déchoir'. Il lui revient de construire son propre refuge et d'y accueillir les images du passé » : Cyril Neyrat, « Un vieil endroit », dans *Cahiers du Cinéma*, Avril 2006, p. 11.

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Godard's Family Photo Album

Jean-Luc Godard's idea to work on a history of cinema with the means of cinema, with a collage of images and sounds, dates back to the 1970s. When he had the opportunity to hold a series of lectures – or voyages, as he himself called them – at the Montreal film school Conservatoire d'Art Cinématographique in 1978, he tried to further develop these plans. The protocols of these lectures were later published as a book, *Intoduction à une véritable histoire du cinéma*.[1] This book can be read as a kind of abstract or exposée to the *Histoire(s) du cinéma*, or as Michael Witt suggested, as a scenario.[2] The initial plan for the Montreal lectures was to work with a collage or montage of sequences from different films. But this wasn't possible due to technical limitations and availability of prints. So Godard decided in each voyage to show one of his own films and several by other directors that he felt were meaningful in connection with his film. Either he was influenced by them while making his film or just because he had a certain memory of the time watching the film that he felt might be related in some way to his own work.

During the first voyage, Godard explained that he had chosen this concept because he had reached a point in his life, he was almost 50 at the time, when he wanted to review certain things of his working life and *œuvre*. He felt, that since he had been connected with cinema for 30 years and had made films for 20, he wanted to look back at his "cinematographic capital," in order to collect the "interest" for the remaining 30 years of his working life. With regard to his own cinematographic past, Godard claimed in Montreal, that he felt like looking through his family photo album. But this album does not contain birthdays, christmas dinners etc. but his working life, something an employee at an insurance company or a worker at General Motors probably wouldn't have. And he definitely wouldn't have sounds from his working life. Godard also hoped, that by looking through this cinematographic family photo album, he would go through a kind of psychoanalysis of his work by evoking his past and his memories.[3]

Due to the close relation between the Montreal lectures and the *Histoire(s) du cinéma*, I would like start with the thought of the cinematographic family photo album and take a look at the *Histoire(s) du cinéma* from this perspective. First I would like to make some brief remarks on the family photo album being a kind of archive of one's personal past. In a second step, I will give a brief overview on Godard's own films which he actually quotes or uses in his *Histoire(s) du cinéma* and I will point to the circumstances under which he uses them. Of course, the concept of family photo album is extendable to Godard's film-viewing past as well, but this goes beyond the scope of this paper, so I will focus on Godard's own films that are contained in the *Histoire(s) du cinéma*.

During the Montreal lectures, Godard continued to follow the thought of family photo album after he had left the room during the projection of Otto Preminger's film *Fallen Angel* (1945), which he had paired with *À bout de souffle* (1960). Godard said, he suddenly felt kind of embarrased while watching the film, just as if going through personal memories in front of other people. He said, he had a feeling of recognizing his family in those two films, but was also wondering about why, and how he belonged to this family, because he somehow felt estranged from them. He felt, he had not much in common with them anymore.[4] Of course, this is nothing unusual, to feel awkward or irritated by looking at your own past. Even more so, if you fail to evoke how you felt at the time or how you felt towards another person, who by now ceased to be important for you. With regard to home movies Vivian Sobchack describes what happens if this failure creates a feeling of loss:

> *Our intentional objective is to rejoin […] the real event or person or our real selves "elsewhere" and in other times. The impossibility of realizing this objective, however, leads to what [the belgian psychologist Meunier; F.L.] calls an "empty sympathy" – which we call* "nostalgia."[5]

A family photo album or a home movie is a personal archive that can only contain little fragments of a past life. So it is less a container of memory in itself, but more a stimulator or catalyzer for the evocation of memories. And these memories can only be evoked if you have actually had them or can remember them. That's why it is mostly boring to look at someone else's family photographs. In a 1967 interview for the release of *La Chinoise* (1967), Godard asked the following question: "*Quand on voit une photo de soi, est-ce qu'on est fictif ou non?*"[6] On the one hand this is a question about photography in general, but it also applies to the question of memory and evoking your past. And the feeling of fictitiousness might increase when the photo had been taken a long time ago. In *La Chambre claire*, Roland Barthes describes the irritation that might occur when you see yourself on a photograph, so you have the proof that you experienced this moment, but you are not able to remember the situation or where or when it was taken.[7] You then might start to fictionalize your past. Barthes goes on describing the dangers of overwriting your own memories by what he calls "counter-memories," that might develop while looking at a family photo album. "One day, some friends were talking about their childhood memories; they had any number; but I, who had just been looking at my old photographs, had none left."[8]

Now, coming back to the *Histoire(s) du cinéma*. When you look at family photos or home movies, you experience an immediate feeling or reaction to the material, and what Godard experienced in Montreal, was exactly such a reaction. But, we know about this only because he spoke of it. And it is the same thing in the *Histoire(s) du cinéma*. We, as viewers cannot relate to his feelings and memories unless he tells us about them, or unless he includes them voluntarily or subconsciously in whatever form in his montage. Apart from that, and this is where the *Histoire(s) du cinéma* differs significantly from your best friends photo album, they become our family photo album as well. Because we might have our own memories with Godard and his films, and with all the other films, images and sounds that he quotes. This past can also be evoked by looking at *his* family photo album. But in the amount of space given here, let's stick to the different ways of how Godard includes his past *œuvre* in the *Histoire(s) du cinéma*.

The largest number of images and sounds from Godard's own films in *Histoire(s) du cinéma* come from newer films that he made in the same period of time that he also worked on the *Histoire(s) du cinéma*: *King Lear* (1987), *Soigne ta droite* (1987), *Allemagne neuf zéro* (1991*)*, *JLG/JLG* (1995), *Nouvelle Vague* (1990), *Helas pour moi* (1993), *For Ever Mozart* (1996) etc. Quotes from these films appear in this order, and are then used quite regularly until the end of the series. But these are not the films that I am really interested in at this point. I believe that Godard has a better recollection of the images and sounds from the films he had made recently, compared to his earlier work. Especially with regard to sounds and music there seems to be a kind of pool of material, ready to use whenever it seems appropriate. So following this line of thought, the newer images are not only regarded as "belonging" to one film, but also become material that Godard uses to create his montage in his films in general. These images and sounds used in the *Histoire(s) du cinéma* also feel closer to the material Godard has created especially for the *Histoire(s) du cinéma* or has shot while working on one of the other films, but has used only in the *Histoire(s) du cinéma*. So I have the impression, that this material can certainly be identified as being made by Godard and being part of Godard's other films, but these images and sounds blend in more easily and even seem to partially deny their origins. Alain Bergala is claiming a similar thing, he says, that especially in the last episodes, one feels less and less reminded of the original films, one even forgets where the images come from.[9] Asked about this by Bergala in an interview, Godard replied that this was exactly his intention.[10] And if you look at how the quotes from Godard's films are distributed among the eight episodes, it becomes obvious that the number of quotes from older films decreases with the development of the series, while the number of images from rather current films increases. Altogether I found quotes from 28 of Godard's films, 18 of them were made before 1987, but in the end, they are quoted less frequently. These older films are the films I will focus on, but I will not necessarily exclude the newer material.

In some cases Godard simply quotes the title (*Le Petit Soldat, Sauve qui peut*). In other instances, he uses publicity stills or single frames from a film (*Pierrot le fou*, *Ici et ailleurs*, *Passion*, *Les Carabiniers*, *One Plus One*), but he also uses film sequences with a length of up to over two minutes, some in its original order, but intercut or superimposed with other images and sounds (e.g. *Prénom Carmen, Détéctive* and the longest quotes are from *Le Mépris* and *Alphaville*). *Alphaville* for example is used in a long sequence in *3b*, mounted parallel to Fritz Lang's *Der müde Tod*. The sequence deals mostly with Germany, German history and it's mortal consequences. And in a less rigid montage, he deals with German film history of the Weimar years brought together with Godard's later visit to Weimar with his other Lemmy Caution film which deals with Germany, *Allemagne neuf zéro*. A rather illustrative example can be found in episode *1b*, which Godard dedicates to Glauber Rocha. He shows an image of Rocha from *Vent d'est* while the dedication is visible on the screen; also the crows are audible in this sequence, just as in so many other newer Godard films.

Images of burning cars from *Week-end* are used twice, but in different ways. In *2b*, Godard uses the images in a way, that at first seems rather illustrating. Godard says: "*Les films sont des marchandises et il faut brûler les films*" / "*Je l'avais dit à Langlois, mais attention avec le feu intérieur*" / "*l'art est comme l'incendie, il naît de ce qu'il brûle*" – lines that he also says in *JLG/JLG*. Godard is seen in front of a bookshelf, looking through books, and is superimposed over the flames. So on the one hand it seems to be an illustration, a stressing of the fire or burning metaphor, but it becomes more personal through the superimposition of Godard, who includes himself in the image. But I have the feeling that he connects himself rather to the thought of fire and art, than to the images of *Week-end* – that is to say, than to images which belong to any particular film.

Probably the largest group of quotes can be labeled "Cinema Equipment:" cameras, editing tables, film-cans, screening rooms from *Caméra-oeil* (from *Loin du Vietnam*), *Grandeur et decadence d'un petit commerce du cinéma*, *France tour detour deux enfants*, *Le mépris*, *JLG/JLG*, *King Lear*, *One Plus One*, *For Ever Mozart*, *Soigne ta droite* etc. But there are also many quotes with film equipment from other films and I can see no special treatment of Godard's "own" equipment.

More personal might be the quotes which include Anna Karina, his first wife. *Pierrot le fou* is quoted three times, all quotes include her: she is on the film still from *Pierrot le fou* in *1b*, in *4b* there is the famous shot with her and the scissors, as a cut or division between two themes, and in *3a* she is heard speaking off screen. While driving in the car with Belmondo, she speaks of resistance fighters, and since Godard had just dealt with the liberation of Paris, you connect her words with World War II. However, in the original film, she speaks of the war in Vietnam. So Godard changes the original reference of his material, or he generalizes it, by pointing to the similarity of all wars and all movements of resistance; especially cinematographic resistance. Then there is a quote from *Une femme est une femme* with Anna Karina only partly visible, since it is used in a superimposition with Eisenstein, Eisenstein's lions and the written words *Montage mon beau soucis* the title of a text Godard wrote in 1956.[11] *Bande Apart* is quoted twice: in *2b*, the three characters dancing, and in *1a* there is a brief, more personal moment with Anna Karina. Godard deals with films that were never made. He says the title of Max Ophüls' aborted swiss project *L'école des femmes*, while we see a shot from *King Lear*, Molly Ringwald falling on her knees at the balkony door, Lake Geneva in the background. The Ophüls' film was supposed to be shot there. The title *Le Mépris* appears on the screen, the sounds of Godard's typewriter are very present and in the background one can hear Anna Karina singing. This is part of a longer sequence from *Bande apart*: the image appears a couple of instances later. She is looking into the camera, now saying, now singing "*Le malheur au malheur ressemble / Il est profond profond profond.*"[12]

Lines from a poem by Louis Aragon. One hears Godard's voice, pronouncing the titles of films and books while one can still hear her singing, barely audible, but not visible anymore. Then he says: *"adieu ma jolie."* *Adieu ma joli* is on the one hand the french title of Raymond Chandler's book *Farewell my lovely* and the film that has been made from the novel. On the other hand, Godard says it after the image of Anna Karina has disappeared and in a softer tone of voice as before. I don't want to make too much of it, but at least I liked the – let's say – coincidence of him saying farewell to his lovely ex-wife. A couple of instances later he says "*Bonjour Tristesse*" which is also the title of Francoise Sagan's book and Otto Preminger's film with Jean Seberg.

In *1b* Godard actually says the personal pronoun "*Je*" / "*I*" in connection with two of his films: *Le mépris* and *Soigne ta droite*, which he calls by its alternative title or subtitle, *Une place sur la terre. Le Mépris* is the most prominent Godard film in the first two episodes, and again mentioned in *2b* – but not after that. After music and dialogue from *Week-end* are audible in the background, Godard starts with an altered quote from Bertolt Brecht that he later identifies: "*bientôt, chaque matin, il n'aura plus besoin d'aller au marché où on vend des mensonges. Bientôt, il ne se rangera plus tout joyeux du côté des vendeurs.*" At the same time Godard shows an image of a market and then one of Bertolt Brecht. Godard continues: "*J'ai enregistré cette phrase de Brecht et j'ai demandé à Fritz Lang de la dire à Brigitte Bardot, et j'ai appelé le film* Le Mépris."

So he basically says: "I made this film." And in one of the following shots from *Le Mépris*, you can see the old Godard in his study, lighting his cigar, then looking up, superimposed over the final shots of *Le mépris*, with the young Godard as assistant director saying the commandos.

In a way, I see this image as a metaphor for the *Histoire(s) du cinéma* as family photo album. Godard seems to be watching what he once created. He seems to be watching himself through a cinematographic metaphor.

To briefly sum up my thoughts on the *Histoire(s) du cinéma* as cinematographic family photo album: have we found a feeling of embarrassment or irritation on Godard's part? Have we seen nostalgia towards his old films? Memories? Counter memories overwriting others? He acknowledged only one of his older films by saying the title and "I" made this. But what kind of "I" is this anyway? All of these films obviously stand out for us experienced Godard viewers, but are they supposed to stand out for us? Are they supposed to stand out for Godard? I tend to answer with a careful "No," but Godard might have had the feelings I have described while he watched his own films, but these feelings are barely evident in the *Histoire(s) du cinéma*. Even in the examples I have described more detailed, which to me seem to be the most personal, I can see only hints of it. There are probably moments regarding other subjects or even his own non-filmmaking past where these personal reactions might be more clearly visible, but to me, hardly with regard to his own cinematographic past.

Notes

[1] Jean-Luc Godard, *Introduction à une véritable histoire du cinéma*, vol. 1, Albatros, Paris 1980.

[2] Michael Witt, "Introduction. Jean-Luc Godard: *Histoire(s) du cinéma* (1988-1998)," in *Screen*, vol. 40, no. 3, Autumn 1999, p. 304.

[3] Jean-Luc Godard, *Introduction à une véritable histoire du cinéma*, cit., pp. 21-22.

[4] *Idem*, pp. 24-25.

[5] Vivian Sobchack, *Toward a Phenomenology of Nonfictional Film Experience*, in Jane M. Gaines, Michael Renov (eds.), *Collecting Visible Evidence*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis 1999, p. 248.

[6] Jean-Luc Godard, *Lutter sur deux fronts*, in Alain Bergala (ed.), *Jean-Luc Godard par Jean-Luc Godard*, vol. 1, 1950-1984, Cahiers du cinéma, Paris 1998, p. 305.

[7] Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, Fontana, London 1984, pp. 85-86.

[8] *Idem*, p. 91.

[9] Alain Bergala, *Nul mieux que Godard*, Cahiers du cinéma, Paris 1999, p. 213.

[10] Jean-Luc Godard, *Une boucle bouclée. Nouvel entretien avec Jean-Luc Godard par Alain Bergala*, in Alain Bergala (ed.), *Jean-Luc Godard par Jean-Luc Godard*, vol. 2, 1984-1998, Cahiers du cinéma, Paris 1998, p. 14.

[11] Jean-Luc Godard, *Montage mon beau soucis*, in Alain Bergala (ed.) *Jean-Luc Godard par Jean-Luc Godard*, cit., vol. 1, 1950-1984, pp. 92-94.

[12] Louis Aragon, *Les Poètes*, Gallimard, Paris 1969, p. 190.

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Archive Refusal in *Ulysses' Gaze*

In an interview with Andrew Horton, Theo Angelopoulos describes his films as "cinematic journeys."[1] He speaks of them as "journeys through history as well as through a landscape," as inner journeys which embrace "all the human emotions from love and sexuality to hate and war."[2] It is a resounding claim. But we might well want to ask, "How is one supposed to represent, to chronicle or – to echo the terms of this collection – to filmically *archive* all that?" *Ulysses' Gaze*, the 1995 Cannes Grand Jury prize-winner, provides us with a response to our scepticism. It traces a very rich and comprehensive journey, a voyage across multiple levels and times and spaces. The journey is that of the rootless and practically nameless A., a Greek film director played by Harvey Keitel who returns to his home town after thirty-five years, in search of three missing reels of film shot by the real-life brothers Yannakis and Milton Manakis in the early part of the twentieth century. It is a journey which takes him from Greece to Albania and to the former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia, and then on to Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia and, finally, to Sarajevo through a war-devastated Bosnia. It is a journey in which A., Angelopoulos's Odysseus, finds himself in a situation that is analogous to that of the Homeric character, but with the difference that his Ithaca lies with the missing reels of undeveloped film.[3] And it is a journey of another kind, as well. This other journey occurs around the intersection of the film's diegetic world and the history of cinema. The real-life Manakis brothers, pioneers of cinematic craft and art – whether or not their reels, these or others, are recoverable – are alterbiographical figures in the film. We thereby find ourselves, immediately, in a meta-cinematic *mal d'archive*, and in the fever of re-imagination.

This reference to Jacques Derrida's *Archive Fever* is inescapable, of course. There will be occasion in what follows to pursue it further. Here, let us note that though at the end A. will have found the lost film, it is destined to occupy an ambiguously delineated off-screen space. That is because it is released only to the gaze of A., and not to that of the viewers. We who watch the film are, therefore, not co-journeyers or co-archivists. We are given nothing to verify or interpret, to classify or to consign to any repository. We only watch – and that, it bears stressing, we do on sufferance. We are like visitors to an archive who are tolerated rather than encouraged. What we see has been carefully selected and edited. And A., who, unlike us, is at least afforded a glimpse of this Ur-text of film, is himself not quite a *gardien du temple*, standing in quasi-priestly reverence before the Grail at the end of his quest. Entry to that privileged caste, we know all along, will be denied him. And there may be no temple, anyway, and nothing to guard.

We are used to this kind of story in the narratives of the twentieth century. We have experienced many times, as readers, this searching after a lost or concealed source of sources. It is a trope that is traceable in the metafictions of Borges, Yourcenar, Fowles, Eco, Ackroyd, Byatt, Auster, Bolano, Cercas and others. What intrigues us, for the purpose of this paper, is not whether this fever of questing in *Ulysses' Gaze*, this criti-fictional representation of a wish to complete the (meta)cinematic record, is in any way different – thematically, qualitatively, practically, phenomenologically, formally – when the work at issue is one of cinematic rather than of literary narrative, but *how* it is different. For while it could be taken as read that it would, in fact, be different (one could alternatively say, in what is not an inconsequential choice, "as viewed" or "as watched" rather than "as read") what the differences imply for the specificities of cinema, and how we might need to spin stories of missing reels in a manner that would be distinct from the way we turn stories of missing parchment, are important questions. It is that kind of working through that might make it possible to draw more far-reaching conclusions on the archive *of* cinema, on archive *as* cinema, on *cinema* as archive.

Let us, then, read on, or view further by reading someone else watching Angelopoulos' film. Smaro Kamboureli's *Memory under Siege: Archive Fever in Theo Angelopoulos' Ulysses' Gaze* is entirely persuasive. Our regret here is that we cannot do more than to quote it saying, "No longer a forgotten archive, nor a film we can consume, it resists disclosure."[4] It might well be asked, "What, here, is *it*?" And that, of course, *is* the question. Particularly so if there might be, as you will already have suspected, an identity, a congruence, between the film and the archive in this case. This, you will agree, is not surprising to anyone who has seen *Ulysses' Gaze*, and who has read their Borges or their Eco, their Ackroyd or their Byatt.

We are fully in the trope, and recognise the type of narrative which we are being offered. The trope is that the story we are in is the story of the archive, of its (re)construction. It is itself the narrative of archiving itself, with the non-archivable as its theme. This is teasing, of course. It extends the tantalizing reach within history of that which was original and originary, open and inviting to re-memory if not recovery, and yet it will remain irrecoverable, *a case of archive refusal*. You will have noticed that here we have used Toni Morrison's term "rememory" – for this, ambivalently, will not be one of those stories to pass on. That productive pun at the end of *Beloved* is suggestive. "This is not a story to pass *on*;" "this is not a story to *pass* on." It is, indeed, the riddle of the archive. It is, also, the challenge of whether to accept archiving, or whether to go with archive refusal.

Archive refusal occurs in *Ulysses' Gaze* even in the affectation of generosity and the gesture of invitation, even when we are made to go behind the scenes, as it were. In the screenplay, Angelopoulos suggests that the viewers actually see this "lost" 1902 black and white film, in which an actor playing Odysseus climbs out of the sea and stares into the camera. Eventually, however, he decided to withhold the film from the viewers' gaze. He felt that it was more important for us to see the effect of the lost film on A. rather than the film itself.[5] For recent viewers of the film, this withholding no longer works. This film is viewable in the most accessible and mundane of archives: YouTube. The illustration (fig. 1) is a crucial still from that film.

What the still freezes is, indeed, *Ulysses' Gaze*. We look at it looking back at us, knowing in the space-time of this intriguing specularity that the effect intended by Angelopoulos has to do with the trope of the return, with ends and beginnings, with continuation and stasis, with looking (away) and counter-gazing, with the journey of the soul whose desire to know itself will make the soul look into the soul (this last formulation coincides with Plato's quotation at the beginning of the film) whether the soul be the self-same's or that of the other. What is it that is caught in this freezing of this gaze, in this holding of the time of the archive, as we look at and *com-*

memorate a representation from the past of a timeless yet remediated and media-specific look into futurity? Are the differences spoken of earlier not implicated in this most unnerving of staring out contests, in which we will also have heard the displacing, anachronistic soundtrack of the cinematic reel, reeling us or in, back, *where*, to what time or space, archiving what recording of what recording?

That captured gaze is the backdrop to the rest of our discussion. It is the backdrop to our reflection that the encounter of A.'s gaze with the object of the Manikis brothers' first gaze or, as A. himself calls it, their "first glance," which he identifies with his "own first glance, lost long ago," does not coincide with the end of his quest to find "home," his Ithaca, for the journey can never be over. The gaze, in all these cases, is the glazed eyeing of the inescapability of irresolution. The home-coming would be a return to the original journey, which brings with it the realisation that confirms what A. himself had already stated a few minutes into the film when he quoted Tomas Steavus Eliot's line from "East Coker:" "in my end is my beginning." Regrettably, there is a little bit of *cliché* there. There is a little epigraphic predictability, we must admit. Still, it serves to prime us to the fact that what A. recovers in that lost film is, to put it in Derrida's words, "an irrepressible desire to return to the origin, a homesickness, a nostalgia for the return to the most archaic place of absolute commencement."[6] That most archaic place of absolute commencement is the journey itself, the very first thing God made, as Nikos, A.'s old friend, tells him.

Yet how is one supposed to archive absolute commencement? How, in cinema, is one to archive beginnings: in Greek myth, no less, as well as in the myth of the beginning of Greek film? *Ulysses' Gaze* – and let us recall the still here, where Ulysses is gazing and being gazed at in this image of a beginning in cinematic myth – is an attempt to at least obliquely respond to that. Let us look ahead, then, not forgetting the backdrop provided by the still, at that other cathartic moment of recognition in which A. gazes into the camera and recites the following lines from Homer:

> *When I return*
> *It will be with another man's name.*
> *My coming will be unexpected…*
> *Between one embrace and the next*
> *Between lovers' calls and the whole human adventure*
> *The story never ends.*

The repeatable, perpetuating action that takes place in the opening sequences corresponds with this recital. It unfolds simultaneously in the past and in the present. The past is preserved in the present in a temporal flow which, to draw on Deleuze, "simultaneously makes the present pass and preserves the past in itself."[7] Following the quotation from Plato – "And then the soul too, if it wishes to know itself, will have to look into the soul" – the film opens with footage from a black-and-white silent film showing village women weaving. With documentarism, in other words. With the very stuff of cinematic archive. In voice-over, A. says: "*Weavers in Advella, a Greek Village (*1905), the first film made by the brothers Miltiades and Yannakis Manakia. The first film ever made in Greece and the Balkans. But is that a fact? Is it the first film? The first gaze?" This is a most unusual beginning, a very different kind of opening. The ontological uncertainty and archiving anxiety A. feels as he wonders whether *Weavers in Advella* is actually the Balkans' ur-filmic text acts as a spur to his burning passion, to that *mal d'archive* which "is never to rest, interminably," and which is destined to search "for the archive right where it slips away."[8] The tone for the film is set, and what follows visually blurs any distinction between past and present, between the oneiric dimension and objective events, as different stages of time unfold within the same space in one single tracking shot without the deployment of conventional narrative links, such as flashbacks or dissolves. For time is collapsed, intra-penetrative, in *Ulysses' Gaze*. We would therefore do well to remember that there where time's dimensions are unclear, even indistinct, it cannot be certain either how archive, originarity, bequeathal, memory, recovery, reconstruction, or commemoration interfuse. As Behzad Ghaderi Sohi and Adineh Khojastehpour write in their Deleuzian reading of time in *Ulysses's Gaze*, "the flashback technique would not satisfy Angelopoulos" because he "does not want to show *recollections* of the past. He wants the past to *live* in the present."[9] Or as Deleuze himself puts it in his commentary on Bergson's concept of time, "the past is not to be confused with the mental existence of recollection-images which actualise it in us. It is preserved in time: it is the virtual element into which we penetrate to look for the 'pure recollection' which will become actual in a 'recollection-image.'"[10] Thus, the opening *plan-séquence* actualises the "pure-recollection" in the recollection-image in the black and white of an elderly man, Yannakis Manakis, trying to photograph with an early-model camera a sailing ship in the winter of 1954. As colour penetrates into this image, the old man collapses and dies and another elderly gentleman, his apprentice, explains what happened to the Manakis brothers: "It was the winter of 1954. Yannakis saw a blue ship moored over there in the harbour of Thessaloniki. He had set his heart on photographing the boat as it left the harbour. One morning the ship sailed away. He died the same evening. As I wrote to you, he kept rambling on about three undeveloped reels, a film which for some reason was never developed since then, since the beginning of the century. I didn't think much of it at the time."

The same sailboat which we first see against a monochromatic screen in 1954 is now seen sailing against a luminously blue sea, in A.'s present time. It is quite the same effect achieved in Katherine Mansfield's extraordinary short story, "*The Wind Blows*," in which it is also a ship which is the point of reference for a moment in time that appears to exist in the recollected past, the experienced present, and the projected future. Upon which, two questions arise. What is the status of an archive that timelessly and a-temporally inhabits time? And if we can find an analogy in Mansfield to what Angelopoulos does in that opening scene, what is the difference of rendering that kind of thought in *film*, as distinct from *literature*? Where does the singularity of the cinematic archive, of the archive as cinema, lie, in other words?

Fredric Jameson offers us a few cues. In *Theo Angelopoulos: The Past as History, the Future as Form*, Fredric Jameson writes:

> *'Style' needs to be defined in such a way that it can be used methodologically in two directions alternatively: one face turned towards the form, the other towards content. The notion of style must, in other words, offer an articulated account of what used to be called techniques and formal characteristics, which can then in a second move be reversed, like James' well-known carpet, in such a way as to reveal the 'unified' figure of what is often called a 'world view' (or a philosophy or an ideology) something similar to what Hegel or Marx called 'the content of the form,' or what Mark Schorer termed, paradigmatically for the American New Criticism, 'technique as discovery.'*[11]

In short, for Jameson, "formal analysis [...] always leads back to the structure of the content itself."[12] Here, we must scrupulously record that one of us is persuaded by this comment and one, who is a little more intent than the other on the form-dependency and medium-dependency of content, rather isn't. The difference is not incidental, as we shall see.

In any case, mindful of Jameson's precepts on style, such characteristics as "the 'time-destroying' technique"[13] of the single tracking shot of the opening sequences in which past and present unfold simultaneously are to be read not only as a formal feature but also as a political issue. Jameson suggests that only by bringing to the fore the "historicity" of such dazzling displays of the "supreme play of chronologies," of the merging of narrative time, of fantasy and history, as in the one with which *Ulysses' Gaze* opens, is it possible to read "the deeper 'meaning' of such features in terms of world view, of 'philosophy' or ideology."[14] The deeper meaning of *Ulysses' Gaze* lies in the way in which it "consummates a kind of transnational spatiality"[15] and "drift[s] decisively away from Greece itself towards some transnational situation which [it] cannot properly fix or identify."[16] This transnational spatiality, typical of road movies, allows Angelopoulos to establish a new type of filmmaking that is truly historical not by virtue of its historical setting but rather because of its receptiveness "to the deeper swirling currents and trends of history after postmodernity itself." Such a receptiveness allows Angelopoulos to posit "the possibility of some new narrative form of regional mapping" and, in the process, it affords "unexpected glimpses of the narrative forms of the future, an inconceivable high art yet to come of the epoch of globalisation and transnational communication, and worldwide mass culture."[17]

Now that, of course, may well be true, and in Jameson's ringing critical prose it no doubt is. But one of us would like to record a dissenting position, which takes some energy from an observation from Paula Amad's excellent book, *Counter-Archive: Film, the Everyday, and Albert Kahn's Archives de la Planète*. Before we come to a quotation that we think is significant, let us claim licence to read from that book's blurb, as a reminder of what the counter-archive in question consists of:

> *Tucked away in a garden on the edge of Paris is a multimedia archive like no other: Albert Kahn's* Archives de la Planète *(1908-1931). Kahn's vast photo-cinematographic experiment preserved world memory through the privileged lens of everyday life, and 'Counter-Archive' situates this project in its biographic, intellectual, and cinematic contexts. Tracing the archive's key influences, such as the philosopher Henri Bergson, the geographer Jean Brunhes, and the biologist Jean Comandon, Paula Amad maps an alternative landscape of French cultural modernity in which vitalist philosophy cross-pollinated with early film theory, documentary film with the avant-garde, cinematic models of temporality with the early Annales school of history, and film's appropriation of the planet with human geography and colonial ideology. At the heart of the book is an insightful meditation upon the transformed concept of the archive in the age of cinema and an innovative argument about film's counter-archival challenge to history.*[18]

This kind of archive, counter-archiving though it is, exemplifies the Jamesonian (p)reference in regard to content over form. But it is not possible to "always historicize." And not even, counter-intuitively, when in the very space of an archive, in its temporal reach and the possibilities thereby for history and historicizing. For what would one do with an archive of the timeless: one that configures itself in the amorphousness of the atemporal, and the atemporality of the amorphous?

The problem is that Jameson's confident formulation risks overlooking the thrust, in form and content, of the very cinematic masterpiece he hails. For *Ulysses' Gaze* problematizes the hold on the political and the historical. It does so through contemplating a possibility that art alone, perhaps, apart from the pathological, could get away with: the ability to stand outside time and space when interpellating or being interpellated through a gaze. Cinema, with Angelopoulos' film, affords the ability to still a gaze, to have it timelessly recast the remediated time of myth and its replaying. This is a film where film language articulates a-grammatical film, breaks the tyranny of the conventional syntax of the filmic sequence, reminds us when we attempt to archive that we are a little too mono-dimensional when we think that we can move with the simple tenses that Jameson places trust in, rather than the auxiliaries and the complexities of the future anterior, for instance, that, as Derrida has shown, and not only in *Archive Fever*, will always have modulated all our records of misremembering.

So what is the time of the archive? How can it be speeded up, slowed down, suspended, approached in the key of recovery and reconstruction rather than through the discomposing modalities of the media at its disposal? It would be anomalous indeed, with a medium like film, not to resource the simple resources of narrative time – in *both* form *and* content – that its own affordances give it, and in which it has advantages over text that those who point to the advantages and depths of the latter can sometimes overlook. If we have used the still that provides our backdrop, which in its current state halts, holds, and indefinitely suspends a gaze, it is because of that too. How would one do that with text? To be sure, it is a gambit that very few scenes from many films could sustain – and to that extent – Jameson is right to suggest that content will determine form. However, it is cinematic form and the in-apprehensible nature of that form to other media – in other words, that which is singularly cinematic, its content resistant to capture or paraphrase, so that it can only be preserved as cinema, in its irreducible cinematic form – that must drive any conclusions we could come to on what it is that *Ulysses' Gaze* teaches us about the meta-cinematic gesture of archiving cinema itself. Which means, in other words, that we shall need to reflect on the best form and the best medium for commentary on the meta-cinematic, commentary on the nature of film archives. Would it be film itself, or something else, or film and something else? Of course, we know the answer to that question already. It will be film and something else, as it was always going to be, and the former approach – (meta)filmic archiving of film – finds itself splendidly exemplified in *Ulysses' Gaze*. If, indeed, Angelopoulos' film is unusual, or even unique, there is some scope for reflection there on what tricks it is that cinema is missing, when what *Ulysses' Gaze* achieves is so sublimely rare.

Before we conclude, here is the promised quotation from *Counter-Archive*:

> *[D]istance and absence have always been a part of the identity of film since 1895. As a medium intended for the projection of moving images whose discrete photographs could never be held, whose frames could never be turned like the pages of a book, whose illusion of movement depended upon what the eye could not see, and whose lifelike resurrection of ghosts so frequently recalled death, film's presence has always been accompanied by absence. Likewise, its ability to find and uncover the past has always been supplemented by its confirmation of the past as lost and unrecoverable. Nearly a half century after its birth, André Bazin, reviewing a compilation film […] summarized the medium's paradox as 'the specifically cinematographic Tragedy, that of Time.' In other words, like the archive, film too poses a dangerous gamble with time.*[19]

Pure film, pure time, pure archive of pure film and time. These are not timescapes that allow conclusions, not when beginnings and private and cultural memory and archiving have been problematized. Angelopoulos has produced a film which both embeds and undoes narratives of the gaze from and on cinema, and which in its different tempos and temporalities places us in the dizzying contradictions, contra-fictions, contra-filmings, of the *mise-en-abîme* of (non-)*archived* archives, whether filmic or otherwise – doing so in a singularly and peculiarly filmic telling. Strange tricks, indeed.

Illustrations

1. Frame from *Ulysses' Gaze* (Theo Angelopoulos, 1995).

Notes

[1] Andrew Horton, *"What Do Our Souls Seek?:" an Interview with Theo Angelopoulos*, in Andrew Horton (ed.), *The Last Modernist. The Films of Theo Angelopoulos*, Praeger, Westport, Connecticut 1997, p. 98.

[2] *Ibidem.*

[3] *Idem*, p. 99.

[4] Smaro Kamboureli, "Memory Under Seige: Archive Fever in Theo Angelopoulos's *Ulysses' Gaze*," http://www.tru.ca/cicac/media/smaro_2007.pdf, p. 11, last access 22 July 2011.

[5] Andrew Horton, *'What Do Our Souls Seek?': An Interview with Theo Angelopoulos*, cit., p. 105.

[6] Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1998, p. 91.

[7] Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time Image*, Continuum, London 2005, p. 95.

[8] Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, cit., p. 91.

[9] Behzad Ghaderi Sohi, Adineh Khojastehpour, "Beginning in the End: Poetry of Greek Tragedy in Theo Angelopoulos's *Ulysses' Gaze* and *The Weeping Meadow*," in *Literature/Film Quarterly*, vol. 38, no. 1, 2010, p. 64.

[10] Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time Image*, cit., p. 95.

[11] Fredric Jameson, *Theo Angelopoulos: The Past as History, the Future as Form*, in Andrew Horton (ed.), *The Last Modernist. The Films of Theo Angelopoulos*, Flicks Books, Trowbridge 1997, p. 79.

[12] *Idem*, p. 88.

[13] Andrew Horton, *Theo Angelopoulos. A Cinema of Contemplation*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey 1997, p. 185.

[14] Fredric Jameson, *Theo Angelopoulos: The Past as History, the Future as Form*, in Andrew Horton (ed.), *The Last Modernist. The Films of Theo Angelopoulos*, cit., p. 87.

[15] *Idem*, p. 78.

[16] *Idem*, p. 92.

[17] *Ibidem.*

[18] Paula Amad, *Counter-Archive. Film, the Everyday, and Albert Kahn's* Archives de la Planète, Columbia University Press, New York 2010.

[19] *Idem*, p. 2.

Archival Footage: Time and Remediation

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Films d'archives et temps revisité

24 Hours Editing

Si Deleuze nous a enseigné à considérer le film comme un bloc de pensée et comme un bloc de pensée sculpté dans la durée, qu'entraîne la variation de cette durée ? Quel sens peut-on trouver en « tortillant » le matériau original, en le pensant dans de nouvelles possibilités combinatoires, en se réappropriant des chutes tout en travaillant sur de nouvelles durabilités ?

Telles sont des questions que nous nous posons fréquemment, aussi bien au niveau des études théoriques que dans l'activité cinématographique. Par exemple, en assemblant du matériel d'archives, nous nous rendons vite compte que les traditionnelles règles du montage ne nous servent presque plus. Le « raccord sur l'axe » ou les « 180 degrés » deviennent les indications d'une syntaxe désormais dépassée. Il suffit de penser à la force du ralenti : si nous instaurons un temps différent du temps « nature » – équivalant à 24 photogrammes par seconde – en modulant une nouvelle vitesse dans le défilement du film, non seulement nous mettons en évidence l'artificialité des images et leur appartenance au dispositif, mais nous exaltons aussi la valeur de l'image qui est « traité ». Notre manipulation débloque un potentiel de signification redevenu visible, une « vérité plurielle » admise au nouveau terrain du regard, grâce à une temporalité soustraite à un apparent ordre naturel des choses. « J'insiste sur le mot, manipulé, bien que les mains n'aient plus la même place dans l'écriture du film, depuis que les machines de montage contemporaines utilisent les logiciels numériques ».[1] Le montage, qui se présentait en tant que construction d'un sens uni, unique et linéaire, travaille ici sur la disparition de ce sens, sur la survie incertaine de l'image, sur la collision entre divers temps. Comme le rappelle Deleuze, « Les rapports temporels ne sont jamais visibles dans la perception ordinaire, mais ils le sont dans l'image, à partir du moment où celle-ci est créatrice. L'image rend sensibles et visibles les rapports irréductibles au présent ».[2]

Les Frères Lumière appliquaient déjà certaines révisions temporelles du cinéma, lorsque par exemple ils suggéraient la rétroprojection pour des vues comme *Démolition d'un mur*.

Toutefois, plus proche de nous, peut-être que l'un des premiers travaux de ciné-ralenti à avoir un écho international serait *24 Hours Psyco* (1993), une œuvre paradigmatique, présentée initialement à Glasgow et à Berlin puis, en 2006, au *Museum of Modern Art* de New York. Dans cette œuvre, Douglas Gordon « réexamine des images d'archives, l'extraction et la dissection d'images souvent ralenties et, dans son processus, révèle des aspects psychologiques et socioculturels de l'Histoire ».[3] Désormais, cette installation est restée célèbre, grâce notamment au roman de Don De Lillo, *Omega Point*, dont le protagoniste est tellement touché par l'œuvre de Gordon qu'il ne veut plus sortir du musée qui l'accueille. Il la voit et la revoit, et se projette dans l'esprit des autres spectateurs en cherchant de savoir comment ceux-ci peuvent vivre ce séduisant ralentissement du film d'Hitchcock. « Altération comme processus de l'altérité »,[4] destruction d'un signifié clair pour l'exaltation d'autres potentiels, eux aussi signifiés.

L'exemple de *24 Hours Psyco* (1993) est important car, dans la reformulation du flux filmique, le cinéma sort progressivement de la salle et s'élargit vers d'autres espaces de présences dans le monde contemporain. D'ailleurs, le corollaire de notre réflexion est constitué par les nouvelles sémantisations du cinéma délocalisé. Durant les dernières années, les remarquables processus de relocalisation – des homes cinémas aux galeries d'art, des téléphones portables aux écrans géants des villes – nécessitent presque toujours une variation rythmique du flux des images mises en jeu.[5] Une variation qui, par la même, est au service d'exigences externes – celles du *display*, du musée ou de la ville – et amènent à redéfinir certains caractères du lieu, en faisant ressortir de nouveaux points sur lesquels il faut être attentifs. Il se peut toutefois que ces films ne nous projettent plus des images mais des temps, voire le temps en soi, la matérialisation de son passage, jamais inoffensif. De plus en plus, nous substituons au mythe du réalisme ou de la « vérité documentaire » une recherche à mi-chemin entre les mémoires personnelles et les histoires publiques. Ces deux ordres, celui des anamnèses individuelles et celui des récits collectifs, s'entrecroisent sans cesse. Comment en rendre compte ? Nous avons l'impression que ces fragments ralentis racontent leur temps, mais qu'ils ne peuvent ou ne réussissent à le saturer. Peut-être notre regard cherche-t-il à combler ce manque ? Ou qu'une raison de notre plaisir soit justement scellée par ce manque ?

Telles sont quelques questions intrigantes que l'on pourrait se poser, car travailler sur les mises à l'écart signifie revoir « la loi de ce qui ne peut être dit ».[6] Des mots pris chez Foucault, importants pour nous : « L'archive n'est pas ce qui sauve, malgré sa fuite immédiate, l'évènement de l'énoncé et, pour les mémoires à venir, conserve son statut civil d'évadée. L'archive n'est même pas ce qui recueille la poussière des énoncés redevenus inertes et permet l'éventuel miracle de leur résurrection ».[7] Le miracle et la résurrection tendent au mystique mais l'intention est de déconstruire le côté idéologique et autoritaire des institutions, et ceci en soustrayant l'énoncé chaque fois que l'on tente d'en forcer l'intelligibilité, en le libérant de la nécessité de l'interprétation. Des visions « strabiques », donc, permettant de dévoiler la propagande dans le matériau et de faire émerger le non-dit, le non-visible, dans un creusement iconographique capable de s'éloigner de l'apparente neutralité du réalisme cinématographique.

Un intérêt grandissant

L'intérêt pour le recyclage des archives dépasse désormais les barrières des disciplines. Dans un essai publié en 2009, François Niney évoque l'intérêt pour le « *found footage* », situé au centre de quatre courants : 1) la remise en question du mythe du « progrès historiographique » ; 2) la reconsidération du cinéma « primitif » ; 3) la conscience, démontrée par certains historiens, d'une valeur des images ne se limitant pas à leur contenu, à leur idéologie ou à leur style ; 4) l'intérêt du cinéma expérimental pour les possibilités esthétiques, anthropologiques et politiques du recyclage d'archives.[8] Voyons-en de plus près les interlocuteurs, véritables protagonistes de cette *found footage wave*.

Citons tout d'abord quelques cinémathécaires très particuliers, comme Pierre Delpeut : je me rappelle de son film *Lyrisch Nitraat* (1991), réalisé avec la collaboration de l'Amsterdam Film Museum en assemblant des morceaux de films du cinéma muet ; ou bien encore de Paolo Cerchi Usai : je pense à *Passio* (2007), un long-métrage conçu pour une projection dont la musique est jouée directement dans la salle, réalisé avec des images d'archives provenant de cinémathèques du monde entier, de la Nouvelle-Zélande au Brésil. Ce sont deux cinémathécaires qui réemploient leurs archives pour composer des films-manifeste, des œuvres-monde sur le cinéma en soi, sur son incessante destruction. Comme s'ils mettaient en évidence l'aporie inhérente à leur travail, dans le rapport entre une promesse – celle des archives : positiviste, philologique, classificatoire – et le caractère éternellement provisoire du sens lié au dilemme des images.[9]

Les autres, des historiens, mais surtout des théoriciens du cinéma et des images, partent de la réutilisation de films anciens pour un voyage vers des paradigmes à venir, attirés qu'ils sont par la redéfinition des processus narratifs, par la capitulation de certains modèles sémiotiques, par l'élargissement des territoires esthétiques consentis par une mise en crise du vieux « cinéma d'archives ». Une confrontation serrée, un va-et-vient entre histoire et théorie qui, dans des œuvres comme *Remontages du Temps Subi*, le dernier livre de Didi-Huberman, ont une réflexion profonde sur les responsabilités de l'histoire dans l'utilisation des images. Une belle bordée aux limites mêmes du réalisme, un attachement lié à la puissance du montage, laquelle émerge à nouveau dans toute sa complexité.[10]

D'autres encore, des artistes – je pense à des personnes très différentes comme Douglas Gordon, Artavadz Pelesjan, Peter Forgacs, Bill Morrison, Yervant Gianikian et Angela Ricci Lucchi – sont plutôt attirés par la reconfiguration de l'image en termes esthétique-politiques.

Loin d'être une *compilation film*, entendue comme une traditionnelle œuvre de montage,[11] le travail de ces auteurs sur le film est marqué par une opérativité qui risque des raccords inusités, des décompositions et des recompositions du cadre, des ralentis ou des accélérations du flux filmique, des réitérations, des soustractions et des colorisations d'images. Dans une sorte d'état gazeux de la communication, le *found footage* semble leur garantir un réservoir de potentialités signifiantes, poussées au dépassement des paradigmes monothéistiques : des palettes esthétiques qui renforcent la thèse défendant l'existence de vérités plurielles, même anachroniques – et pour cela, pleinement contemporaines. « Si par contemporain », comme le soutient Agamben, « on entend celui qui fixe le regard sur son temps, non pour en percevoir les lumières mais bien son obscurité »,[12] alors ces auteurs me semblent la plus prégnante incarnation de l'artiste contemporain.

Le Désoeuvrement et le format

Travailler sur les archives, en évitant une phase *a priori* fondamentale pour la création cinématographique – celle du tournage – ouvre grand les portes vers une « inopérativité filmique » qui, conjointement, constitue un projet central et un acte politique.[13] Cette inopérativité est au ralentissement économique ce que l'hyperproduction d'images est au capitalisme. Alors que la multiplication des chaînes, le triomphe annoncé de la 3D et la HD poussent à produire des images toujours neuves, le recyclage d'archives jouit d'une latence qui rappelle les expériences de la lenteur. Ce n'est pas par hasard que le *found footage* requiert une sérendipité, une longue phase de montage, une ouverture vers l'imprévu. Des choix pris au dernier moment déplacent les modalités hyperproductives du visuel et basculent vers une récession iconique et une latence « professionnelle » : ainsi, des espaces d'observations dilatés font de la réflexion, plus que de l'action, le centre philosophique de leur « mise en série ». Cette perspective s'oppose au flux incessant de la société du spectacle : un désœuvrement, une inopérativité qui deviennent des choix « amateuriels », éloignés des fards des grands producteurs d'imaginaires. Une pièce, celle de la représentation « amateurielle » du monde, s'extirpe de la maison surveillée des pratiques « innocentes » pour élargir l'enceinte du complexe, en observer les chocs symboliques et dévoiler « ce striptease qu'on appelle le progrè », l'idée que la culture du XX^{ème} siècle se croyait à l'abri des mythologies.[14]

Alors que les porte-drapeaux de la qualité télévisuelle ovationnent la dictature du format et que ses images s'exportent vers divers médias, le signe d'un standard – technique et esthétique – semble réduire les possibilités d'autres formules. Le diktat technocratique dévalorise l'expérimentation linguistique et prône le consensus de l'audimat. La sainte alliance entre marchandise et spectacle ne peut supporter ce qui n'est pas préfabriqué.

Justement, là où un (effet de) réalisme est désiré, la construction est plus ostensible et la dramaturgie plus rigide. À l'opposé, le *footage* non apprivoisé retourne à l'acte originel, à l'image pré-structurée/déstructurée, en déplaçant les missions téléguidées par la sémiosphère du capitalisme. C'est une lutte de formes contre la forme totalitaire de l'information et des zones supposées neutres : sport, météo, coutumes, voyages, nature, publicité etc. C'est là qu'agit le *footage*, qu'il désincruste, qu'il met en évidence le hors champ, qu'il exalte le doute du passé et sur le passé, qu'il défait le cadrage en style ordonné et exalte la limite des frontières entre vu et visible, entre imaginé et imaginable, entre l'apparaître et le disparaître. Il disperse hypnotiquement le temps frigide du format et celui, mortuaire, du palimpseste. « Le formatage des œuvres audiovisuelles finit, au bout de la chaine, par être un formatage du voir et de l'entendre, du sentir et du rêver ».[15] C'est pourquoi le contrôle des archives va jusqu'au contrôle de l'Histoire et, ainsi, à la façon de gérer le présent et de construire le futur. Derrida intitule son ouvrage *Mal d'archive*, en nous servant un étyme – *Arché* – inscrit dans l'ordre du commencement et dans l'ordre du commandement.[16] Tel est sa topologie privilégiée, sa fonction « patri-archique », son pouvoir de rendu institutionnel. Toujours évident, cet aspect politique.

Faim de montage

Pourtant, le collage, l'art de rassembler des morceaux de monde désordonnés et le saccage d'objets-images préexistants avaient déjà démantelé l'idée d'une trame cohérente, d'un récit linéaire et de la vision en perspective datant de la Renaissance. Un ludique banditisme iconique inauguré par Picasso, Apollinaire, Duchamp et poursuivi par un mouvement comme le dadaïsme avait compromis l'idée d'une œuvre pure, exaltant leur travail dans l'univers d'une décharge de signes : en quelque sorte, ce que notre usage des médias a rendu commun, à travers des pratiques quotidiennes faites de *links* et de connexions, de fichiers partagés et manipulés. Des natures hybrides, dans lesquelles le recyclage et la « dé-grammaticalisation » due à la basse qualité empêchent les arts traditionnels de maîtriser le monde. C'est pourquoi, en partant du concept avant-gardiste d'assemblages, les idées de plagiat, de citation, de « vérité » de l'œuvre originelle évoluent elles aussi. Et aujourd'hui le montage est au centre des pratiques discursives les plus intéressantes, capable de tracer des parcours significatifs « sans jamais offrir une solution fermée […] véritable forme de spoliation et nouvelle mission du regard ».[17]

Si jusqu'alors, nous nous sommes concentré sur le traditionnel paradigme scopique, une composante fondamentale du détournement perceptif dans le recyclage d'archives vient des éléments sonores, de l'entier paysage sonore plus que de l'accompagnement musical en soi.

C'est aussi grâce à ce paysage sonore que le développement des films *found footage* ne forme en aucun cas « un résidu de l'expérience, plus ou moins identique pour tous »,[18] mais plutôt un lieu de renégociation tourmenté, une forêt dans laquelle le sens doit se réactualiser.

Si, comme le rappelle Schafer,[19] « entendre, c'est toucher à distance », notre re-vision contemporaine fait ressurgir certaines possibilités passées aux oubliettes. Dans une rencontre/confrontation avec des fragments éloignés de la voix-off omnisciente et d'un accompagnement référentiel, le nouveau cinéma d'archives utilise des traces audio découlant de l'enchâssement des voix (décontextualisées des films auxquelles elles appartiennent), du rapprochement de fragments stochastiques et de données dérivant d'autobiographies et/ou d'essais.

Il s'agit d'un processus plus vaste qui est en train d'investir les territoires de l'esthétique, tels qu'ils ont été mis en évidence par David Shields dans son récent livre *Reality Hunger*.

Shields construit un manifeste théorique pour une nouvelle littérature mais bon nombre de ses considérations sont aussi valables pour le cinéma. Dans ses grandes lignes, Shields soutient qu'au terme des narrations marquées par une époque, l'œuvre traditionnelle perd son sens. « Un mouvement artistique est en train de se créer. Quels sont ses traits caractéristiques ? Une « inartisticité » voulue, un matériau « brut », apparemment non travaillé, non filtré, non censuré et non professionnel. Contingence, disponibilité vers l'imprévu et la serendipité, spontanéisme, risque artistique, urgence et intensité émotive, interaction du lecteur-spectateur ; la critique comme autobiographie ; l'autoréflexivité, l'auto-ethnographie, l'autobiographie anthropologique ; une ligne de démarcation de plus en plus subtile (jusqu'à en devenir invisible) entre la fiction et la non-fiction ».[20]

Entre les archives et le montage se trouve quelque chose que les images ne sont pas habituées à nous montrer. Un sursis du sens pré-vu, un choc cognitif, une attaque partant des signes de l'archaïque pour arriver aux paroxysmes de la modernité – ainsi se définit la représentation cinématographique du monde – semblaient définir la contemporanéité. Peut-être que « pour ouvrir les yeux, il faut savoir les fermer. L'œil toujours ouvert, toujours en éveil – comme celui d'Argus – devient sec. Un œil sec, ouvert en permanence, voit peut-être tout, mais regarde mal. Paradoxalement, pour bien regarder, nous avons besoin de toutes les larmes dont nous disposons ».[21]

Notes

[1] Dominique Païni, *Le Temps exposé. Le Cinéma de la salle au musée*, Cahiers du cinéma, Paris 2002, p. 13.

[2] Gilles Deleuze, *Le Cerveau, c'est l'écran*, dans Id., *Deux régimes de fous. Textes et entretiens*, 1975-1995 (dir. D. Lapoujade), Éditions de Minuit, Paris 2003, p. 270.

[3] Michael Rush, *New Media in Art*, Thames and Hudson, Londres 2005, p. 148 (traduit par moi).

[4] Dominique Païni, *Le Temps exposé*, cit., p. 63.

[5] Sur les processus de relocalisation on peut consulter Francesco Casetti, « L'esperienza filmica e la rilocazione del cinema », dans *Fata morgana*, n° 4, 2008, pp. 23-40.

[6] Michel Foucault, *L'archeologia del sapere*, Rizzoli, Milan 1994 (1re éd. française, *L'Archéologie du savoir*, Gallimard, Paris 1969), p. 173 (traduit par moi).

[7] *Idem*, pp. 173-174.

[8] François Niney, *Le Documentaire et ses faux-semblants*, Klincksieck, Paris 2009, pp. 148-149.

[9] Ruggero Eugeni, « Lo spettatore archivio. Cinema, memoria, modernità », dans *Fata morgana*, n° 2, 2007, pp. 29-38.

[10] Georges Didi-Huberman, *Remontages du temps subi. L'Oeil de l'histoire 2*, Éd. de Minuit, Paris 2010. Je me souviens de certains numéros des revues *Comunicazioni sociali* (n° 3, 2005), *Fata Morgana*

(n° 2, 2007), *Cinergie* (n° 14, 2007) et *Arts and Artifacts in Movie - AAM. TAC* (n° 6, 2009), dédiés dans diverses perspectives à ces thèmes.

[11] Je renvoie à Dunja Dogo, « Sul vero e sul falso: lo strano caso dell'archivio footage », et à Davide Ghepardi, « FF. I would prefer not to », dans *Cinergie*, n° 14, 2007, pp. 50-54.

[12] Giorgio Agamben, *Nudità*, Nottetempo, Rome 2009, p. 23 (traduit par moi).

[13] Franco Cassano, *Il pensiero meridiano*, Laterza, Rome-Bari 1999.

[14] Odo Marquard, *Apologia del caso*, Il Mulino, Bologne 1997, p. 42 (traduit par moi).

[15] Jean-Louis Comolli, *Cinéma contre spectacle*, Lagrasse, Verdier 2009, p. 11.

[16] Jacques Derrida, *Mal d'archivio. Un'impressione freudiana* [*Mal d'archive: Une impression freudienne*, Galilée, Paris 1995], Filema, Napoli 2005.

[17] Isabella Mattazzi, « Aprire lo sguardo. Stili della visione in grado di agire sul reale », dans *Il Manifesto*, 8 mars 2011, p. 11 (traduit par moi).

[18] Marcel Proust, *Alla ricerca del tempo perduto. Il tempo ritrovato* (1927), dir. Giovanni Raboni, Mondadori, Milan 1995, pp. 234-243. Accompagnée d'autres extraits de Proust, cette citation est utilisée par Antonio Costa dans l'introduction de son ouvrage *I Leoni di Schneider. Percorsi intertestuali nel cinema ritrovato*, Bulzoni, Rome 2002, pp. 9-18 (traduit par moi).

[19] Raymond Murray Schäfer, *Il paesaggio sonoro*, Lim, Lucca 1998, p. 24.

[20] David Shields, *Fame di realtà* [*Reality Hunger*, Knopf, New York 2010], Fazi, Rome 2010, pp. 9-10 (traduit par moi).

[21] Georges Didi-Huberman, *Ninfa moderna. Saggio sul panneggio caduto*, trad. it. A. Pino, Il Saggiatore, Milan 2004, p. 1.

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L'Archive comme espace de re-création. Autour de *Film ist. a girl & a gun* de Gustav Deutsch

En forgeant la notion d'« archive du 21^{e} siècle » (car c'est bien d'une notion qu'il s'agit), Eric Schaefer a voulu rendre compte d'un important changement de paradigme dans les relations mettant aux prises, d'une part, les archivistes et, de l'autre, les chercheurs.[1] Décisive, cette mutation veut que l'on soit passé, par rebonds successifs, d'un schéma relativement fermé, où les chercheurs en étaient réduits au statut d'« humbles suppliants attendant qu'on les autorise à franchir les portes du savoir »,[2] à un schéma relativement ouvert, où la relation est plutôt pensée en termes « d'objectifs partagés, de confiance et de coopération ».[3] En somme, Schaefer croit pouvoir identifier rien de moins que l'émergence, au cours des deux dernières décennies, d'une nouvelle façon de concevoir l'archive cinématographique.

Référable à des facteurs multiples et divers, cette mutation est bien connue. Pour ma part, je voudrais m'attacher à une autre modalité de cette ouverture et m'interroger sur un décloisonnement impliquant, non pas les archivistes et les chercheurs, mais bien plutôt les archivistes et les cinéastes. Plus spécifiquement, il sera ici question de l'archive comme *espace de création* ou de re-création.

S'il est une œuvre contemporaine qui compte sur les archives, qui s'en nourrit au point d'être impensable sans elles, c'est bien celle du cinéaste autrichien Gustav Deutsch. Une telle proposition se vérifie déjà, exemplairement, quant à *Welt Spiegel Kino*, film de *found footage* qui a connu sa première actualisation en 2005. Le titre l'indique sans détour : avec *Welt Spiegel Kino*, Deutsch entend aborder le cinéma, non comme une fenêtre ouverte sur le monde, mais, dans une optique plus stendhalienne, comme un miroir (« *Spiegel* ») promené le long des chemins. Dans son armature apparente, le film se compose de trois chapitres d'égale longueur (environ une demi-heure) ; chaque épisode retravaille des images tournées aux abords d'une salle de cinéma, respectivement à Vienne en 1912, à Surabaya en 1929 et à Porto en 1930.[4]

Cette réélaboration de l'image d'archive obéit, pour l'essentiel, à un triple mouvement, méthodique et répété. Dans un premier temps, les images prélevées sont exposées telles qu'en elles-mêmes, dans l'état où Deutsch les a trouvées, sous des aspects où dominent le plus souvent le grouillement, le décentrement propres aux scènes de rue et autres vues locales.

Dans un deuxième temps – et le procédé évoque sous cet angle la démarche d'un Ken Jacobs –,[5] ces mêmes images se trouvent détaillées, explorées à l'aide de ralentis et de zooms avant virtuels obtenus à la tireuse optique. Cette pénétration progressive dans l'image d'archive se complémente à son tour d'un moment d'*extrapolation* ou de transfiguration, en quoi Deutsch se démarque cette fois clairement de Ken Jacobs : chacun à leur tour, les personnages isolés par le zoom avant et épinglés par l'arrêt sur image font place, au prix d'un fondu enchaîné soutenu, à des modules d'images corrélées, généralement au motif de ressemblances assez marquées (physiques, vestimentaires entre autres), ce qui, à maintes reprises, produit, comme l'a bien observé Michele Pierson, un curieux *effet-fiction* au départ d'un matériau pourtant majoritairement non-fictionnel.[6] Pour ne prendre qu'un exemple, dans le cadre de l'épisode viennois, juste en face du *Kinematograf Theater Erdberg*, un passant arborant moustache, canne et chapeau déambule en se retournant fréquemment vers l'opérateur qui enregistre son image. Quelques secondes plus tard, le même personnage fait retour dans le film et, saisi par le zoom avant virtuel, figé par l'arrêt sur image, se mue par fondu enchaîné en un soldat lourdement armé – comme si, par un brusque bond dans le temps et en raison de diverses analogies visuelles (port de la moustache et d'un couvre-chef, positionnement du sujet dans le cadre, posture de regard à la caméra, etc.), le paisible badaud de 1912 se vouait d'ores et déjà à prendre part aux carnages de la Grande Guerre.

Ce rapport privilégié et fondateur avec les archives se fait peut-être plus complexe encore dans l'œuvre la plus connue de Deutsch, à savoir *Film ist.* L'année dernière, je m'étais proposé d'examiner un fragment du deuxième volet de ce projet au long cours, dans le but, essentiellement, d'étudier les relations qui peuvent se nouer entre canon cinématographique, film orphelin et cinéma de *found footage*.[7] Cette année, je voudrais explorer le développement le plus récent de *Film ist.*, soit *Film ist. a girl & a gun* (2009), qui forme, à ce jour, le troisième volet de cette œuvre ouverte.

En termes de structure, *a girl & a gun* se découpe, un peu à la manière d'une tragédie classique, en cinq actes, désignés comme tels et intitulés, respectivement, « *Genesis* », « *Paradeisos* », « *Eros* », « *Thanatos* » et « *Symposion* » (c'est-à-dire le « banquet », au sens platonicien du terme). Ces titres renseignent d'entrée de jeu sur la dimension mythologique qui informe l'œuvre de part en part ;[8] ils tendent également à suggérer l'entrée en scène, dans la trame de *Film ist.*, d'un matériau jusque-là inédit, qui n'est autre, en la circonstance, que l'écriture.

Sur ce point, une nuance s'impose immédiatement : les relations complexes entre cinéma et écriture ont déjà fait l'objet des préoccupations de Deutsch, tout particulièrement dans le cadre du chapitre 10 de *Film ist.*, précisément intitulé « *Schrift und Sprache* ». Mais l'écriture qui survient à l'intérieur de *a girl & a gun* est d'une nature différente : elle trouve sa source, non dans d'autres films, mais bien dans des livres et, pour être plus précis, dans des ouvrages antiques. Tout au long de *a girl & a gun*, les images remontées par le cinéaste sont en effet ponctuées par des fragments de texte tirés de Platon, d'Hésiode et de Sapho. D'une certaine manière, la littérature antique se trouve ici soumise au même régime que les images qui forment la substance même du film : elles s'actualisent, elles aussi, à la faveur d'un mécanisme général de prélèvement, de redistribution et de remontage.

Comment situer *a girl & a gun* vis-à-vis des deux volets auxquels ce film fait suite ? Dans une perspective générale, il semble que ce troisième volet opère sur le double mode du prolongement et de la rupture, au moins relative, avec les investigations en images qui l'ont précédé – et c'est évidemment sur ses traits de novation qu'il convient d'abord de faire porter l'attention. À cet égard, la rupture la plus manifeste tient sans nul doute à la logique de prélèvement mise à contribution par le cinéaste.

En matière d'échantillonnage, les six premiers chapitres de *Film ist.* obéissaient, on s'en souvient, à une exclusive d'ordre générique, mais se trouvaient affranchis, en contrepartie, de toute limitation diachronique : vues scientifiques, films pédagogiques ou industriels apportaient tous, à leur façon, de l'eau au moulin du cinéaste, sans considération pour leur ancrage historique. Dans ce volet inaugural de l'œuvre, *Le Discobole* de Marey pouvait frayer sans encombre avec des images tournées dans les années 50 par l'éthologue allemand Paul Leyhausen ou avec des fragments prélevés sur *Les Origines du cinéma scientifique* (1989), film dont l'auteur n'est autre que le cinéaste et historien italien Virgilio Tosi.

Les six chapitres suivants se sont élaborés au prix d'une inversion systématique de ce schéma inaugural. En l'occurrence, Deutsch astreint ses prélèvements à une limitation d'ordre diachronique cette fois : par principe, il fait porter ses recherches exclusivement sur le cinéma muet. Dans le même élan (et c'est là une manière de contrepartie, à nouveau), il libère les images de toute restriction générique, ce pan de l'œuvre s'alimentant de fiction aussi bien que de non-fiction sous toutes ses formes (films ethnographiques, vues militaires, scènes de rue, etc.).

Sous cet angle, *a girl & a gun* présente encore un profil distinct. D'un côté, le protocole d'échantillonnage se soustrait à toute forme de circonscription générique et s'ordonne au principe d'un panachage généralisé. Ouvrant le jeu davantage encore, Deutsch se met en situation d'inclure aussi bien des vues militaires que des fragments de films pornographiques, aussi bien des vues de mode que des fragments de mélodrames, aussi bien des vues chorégraphiques que des films scientifiques (notamment des vues de botanique, assez récurrentes, où se figure classiquement l'éclosion de végétaux en accéléré). Par ailleurs, le champ d'investigation se veut moins contraignant que dans le cas du deuxième volet : il s'étend approximativement sur les quarante-cinq premières années de la production cinématographique, ce qui permet au cinéaste d'intégrer des fragments de films parlants. En termes d'extension à la fois diachronique et générique, *a girl & a gun* s'affiche dès lors, tout ensemble, comme un moment de synthèse et d'ouverture.

Autre élément neuf dans le dispositif imaginé par Deutsch : alors que les deux premiers volets de *Film ist.* en appelaient à des pièces musicales composées pour la circonstance, la bande-son de *a girl & a gun* mélange, aux titres écrits par Christian Fennesz, Burkhard Stangl et Martin Siewert, des compositions préexistantes, généralement contemporaines et relativement confidentielles, qui vont du groupe allemand Bohren & der Club of Gore[9] à la jeune artiste autrichienne Anja Plaschg – plus connue sous le pseudonyme de Soap & Skin –,[10] en passant par David Grubbs et d'autres, configuration qui, de toute évidence, engagerait à reprendre à neuf la question des correspondances, plus ou moins étroites, entre le son et l'image.

En raison des matériaux hétérogènes qu'il brasse, ce troisième volet de *Film ist.* se déploie dans une temporalité flottante, relativement énigmatique. Dans son ensemble, le film vit au rythme d'anachronismes en série, qui concourent à troubler la temporalité même de l'image d'archive. D'une part, l'accompagnement musical tend à tirer ces images vers le monde contemporain, à les projeter dans la sphère de l'aujourd'hui. En sens inverse, les citations antiques refoulent les fragments échantillonnés vers un passé mythologique, secoué par de violents cataclysmes, peuplé de divinités toutes-puissantes et de nymphes. C'est d'ailleurs là l'occasion, pour Deutsch, de jouer de toute une série de télescopages entre l'écrit et l'image, entre l'Antique et le Moderne, mais aussi, par delà, entre culture savante et culture populaire. Ainsi, dans le jeu ouvert par le film, le célèbre colosse Eugene Sandow, immortalisé par Edison sur l'invariable fond noir de la Black Maria,[11] devient une incarnation d'Eros, cependant qu'une femme nue à la lourde poitrine en vient à personnifier la Terre nourricière.

Ailleurs, un soldat, le visage dissimulé par un masque, se voit assimilé à un moderne Cyclope, tandis que des mannequins féminins, posant devant l'appareil de prise de vue dans leurs tenues d'apparat, se transfigurent en filles de Zeus. Dans un sens comme dans l'autre, l'image d'archive se voit en quelque sorte brouillée : si elle s'expose dans son inscription temporelle propre, elle se trouve en même temps tiraillée, écartelée entre le matériau verbal et le matériau musical qui lui font escorte.

En tout état de cause, *a girl & a gun* offre une belle occasion d'examiner *le travail de l'archive*. Par là, il faut entendre la manière dont Deutsch travaille ou retravaille les images d'archives, certes, mais également la façon dont ces images – et les archives où elles se sont accumulées – travaillent en quelque sorte pour lui, dans cet esprit d'ouverture qu'Eric Schaefer tient justement pour définitoire de l'« archive du 21e siècle ».[12] Cela étant, il ne saurait être question, à l'évidence, d'espérer pouvoir aborder *a girl & a gun* dans sa globalité.

En raison de son extrême densité et de la multiplicité des questionnements qu'il charrie, le film semble se refuser d'emblée à toute forme de saisie généraliste. De cette ample fresque, il faudra se contenter, pour l'heure, de détacher un fragment, une sorte d'échantillon qui autorise la mise en lumière de quelques-uns des mécanismes sur lesquels le film repose. À cet effet, le choix se portera sur une séquence relativement brève, située en plein cœur du segment « *Thanatos* » et qui semble particulièrement révélatrice quant à l'espace de re-création (et peut-être même de *récréation*) qu'ouvrent les archives cinématographiques.

Soit la séquence qui débute aux alentours de la cinquante-cinquième minute du film et qui intervient, dans sa structure narrative, juste après la découverte, par deux marins, d'un cadavre féminin rejeté par la mer, étendu parmi les rochers. Dans son principe, cette séquence repose sur une formule de montage déjà explorée à plusieurs reprises dans le cadre du projet *Film ist.*, notamment dans les segments 7.4, 8.3 et 11.3 (autour de thèmes généraux aussi divers que l'inversion temporelle, l'activité onirique et le bovarysme) : il s'agit de ce qu'ailleurs, j'ai proposé de nommer le *montage gravitationnel*. Cette équation de montage repose le plus souvent, comme c'est le cas ici, sur une alternance réglée entre une séquence vertébrale, qui tient lieu de point de repère ou d'ancrage, et un ensemble d'images-satellites qui, sur la foi de rapports divers, viennent graviter autour d'elle, à la manière de micro-constellations.

Dans l'échantillon retenu à l'analyse, la séquence vertébrale est évidemment constituée par la scène médicale. En plan moyen, deux chirurgiens (dont le docteur Eugène Louis Doyen)[13] font mine d'ausculter un personnage féminin à l'aide d'un dispositif relativement complexe, une table d'opération mobile qui permet d'imposer à ce corps nu et inerte toutes les torsions et contorsions possibles, en une sinistre démonstration anatomique qui l'assimile à une vulgaire pièce de viande suspendue à un crochet de boucher.[14] Cette séquence vertébrale nous est livrée dans son déroulement chronologique, mais s'interrompt ponctuellement pour donner lieu à des bifurcations, distinctes, en leur principe, de celles explorées à l'occasion de *Welt Spiegel Kino*. Deutsch, en effet, fragmente la vue médicale et fait entrer quelques-unes de ses composantes en interaction avec quatre séries distinctes d'images-satellites, prises dans des relations plus ou moins serrées avec la scène qu'elles viennent étoiler.

Le rapport à la fois le plus étroit et le plus évident est celui qui se noue entre la séquence vertébrale et quelques images-satellites exhibant des chirurgiens au travail. Cadrées en plan nettement plus rapproché, ces images, issues de *Maman Poupée* (Carmine Gallone, 1919), semblent détailler, à la faveur d'une sorte de raccord dans l'axe, le plan moyen autour duquel s'articule la scène médicale. L'effet de continuité apparente produit par ces fragments hétérogènes tient à ce que, dans la séquence vertébrale comme dans les images-satellites, ce sont non pas quatre, ni trois, mais bien, systématiquement, deux chirurgiens qui trouvent à se figurer.[15] C'est là une équation visuelle qui procède d'une forme de *montage isotopique* : une fois ancrée l'isotopie « deux chirurgiens au travail », cette dernière peut connaître, à l'échelle d'une même séquence, plusieurs incarnations distinctes et successives, variations intégrées et posées comme non contradictoires, ainsi qu'on peut l'observer ailleurs dans l'espace typologique de *Film ist.*[16]

La deuxième série interpolée se compose, pour sa part, de trois fragments démarqués d'un film de *diva*, en l'occurrence *La storia di una donna* (Eugenio Perego, 1920).[17] Placés aux endroits stratégiques de la séquence (début, milieu et fin), ces trois fragments distincts nous montrent, en plan fixe et rapproché, l'actrice Pina Menichelli couchée sur son lit de mort, les yeux clos, le corps recouvert d'un drap blanc. Dans ce schéma de montage gravitationnel, Deutsch tire parti de ressemblances inattendues et fait en sorte que les postures adoptées par la *diva* dans le film de Perego raccordent systématiquement avec celles que les deux chirurgiens imposent à la patiente qu'ils sont occupés à ausculter. En somme, le cinéaste use du film de *diva* pour individualiser le personnage féminin, en lui faisant l'offrande d'un visage – ce visage même que la scène médicale semble obstinément vouloir lui dénier. Une relation métonymique se suggère ici, mais au prix, cette fois, d'un violent télescopage générique.

La troisième série d'images-satellites vit dans une relation qui peut paraître plus problématique avec la séquence vertébrale. Elle rassemble des vues militaires d'une nature un peu particulière : non des scènes de bataille, d'entraînement ou de défilé (comme tel était le cas dans le segment 9.4 de *Film ist.*), mais plutôt des scènes de loisir et de détente (courses, danses, etc.), impliquant le plus souvent des soldats blessés, momentanément mis sur la touche. Nulle aimantation métonymique, nul rapport de ressemblance en la circonstance. Si un rapport est pensable, il ne peut l'être, selon toute apparence, qu'en termes sémantiques et sur le mode de l'inversion. À bien des égards, ces vues militaires tendent en effet à bouleverser la donne actualisée par la séquence vertébrale : dans celle-ci, c'est le sujet féminin qui fait l'objet du rituel médical, alors que, dans celles-là, c'est le sujet masculin qui personnifie le patient – les infirmières qui font acte de présence au sein de chacun de ces plans se vouant à incarner une autre facette, moins traumatique sans doute, de l'univers médical.

La quatrième série, enfin, est prétexte à un rapprochement assez surprenant – ou, au contraire, relativement attendu. À deux reprises en effet, certains éléments de la séquence vertébrale sont placés en résonance avec des vues pornographiques, dont l'une (la deuxième, en l'occurrence) a été débusquée dans les archives du Kinsey Institute for Research in Sex, Gender and Reproduction, aux riches fonds duquel Deutsch et sa partenaire Hanna Schimek ont pu avoir accès. De nouveau, c'est l'analogie qui règle les rapports entre les fragments concaténés, mais elle semble produire ici un effet moins de métonymie que de métaphore. Entre les manipulations du corps féminin par les chirurgiens et les chorégraphies intimes de l'ébat amoureux, tout, dans les attitudes, dans les mouvements, dans les positions respectives des corps, semble se répondre ou se correspondre, par-delà les barrières génériques. À la faveur d'une simple mise en regard, Deutsch éclaire le caractère virtuellement pornographique du geste médical et, comme en chiasme, la dimension potentiellement clinique de l'imagerie pornographique.

Avec *Film ist.*, s'affiche exemplairement le paradoxe fécond d'une avant-garde qui s'abreuve aux archives, qui, pour mieux aller de l'avant, développe un regard rétrospectif. En se le réappropriant, Deutsch contribue à réanimer le patrimoine cinématographique, auquel il donne une urgence nouvelle. Travail minutieux de repérage, patient exercice de mémoire, de mise en relation et de tissage, le projet *Film ist.* est lui aussi, tout bien pesé, affaire de métamorphose. En tant que lieu de recueil et d'exposition des images, le film lui-même *se fait archive*,[18] mimant en quelque sorte, sous des espèces hautement singulières et raisonnées, le lieu même de ses origines.

Notes

[1] Eric Schaefer, « In Focus : The 21st Century Archive », dans *Cinema Journal*, vol. 46, n° 3, printemps 2007, pp. 109-113. Dans la même livraison de cette revue, on consultera utilement les contributions de Rick Prelinger et Dan Streible.

[2] Eric Schaefer, « In Focus : The 21st Century Archive », cit., p. 109.

[3] *Ibidem.*

[4] Quelles qu'en soient les origines géographiques et la localisation temporelle, les images dont Welt Spiegel Kino tire parti se souviennent manifestement des tout débuts du cinéma, en particulier de ces « entrées du cinématographe » tournées par les opérateurs Lumière dès 1896, notamment à Londres et – précisément – à Vienne. En contexte forain, l'on pourra également songer, sous cet aspect, à une vue telle que *Sedgwick's Bioscope Show Front* (Mitchell & Kenyon, 1901).

[5] Scott MacDonald, *Gespräch mit Gustav Deutsch (Teil 2) / A Conversation with Gustav Deutsch (part 2)*, dans Wilbirg Brainin-Donnenberg, Michael Loebenstein (sous la dir. de), *Gustav Deutsch*, Synema, Vienne 2009, p. 158. Face à *Welt Spiegel Kino*, on peut en effet songer au Ken Jacobs, classique, de *Tom, Tom the Piper's Son* (1969), mais aussi à celui, plus récent, de *New York Ghetto Fishmarket 1903* (2006).

[6] Sur ce point, voir Michele Pierson, « Avant-Garde Re-Enactment : *World Mirror Cinema, Decasia and The Heart of the World* », dans *Cinema Journal*, vol. 49, n° 1, automne 2009, pp. 1-19. Pour d'autres remarques sur *Welt Spiegel Kino*, voir le beau texte de David B. Clarke et Marcus A. Doel, « Shooting Space, Tracking Time : the City from Animated Photography to Vernacular Relativity », dans *Cultural Geographies*, vol. 14, n° 4, 2007, pp. 589-609 (et, plus particulièrement, pp. 602-603).

[7] Voir Livio Belloï, *Exposer, explorer, exploser. Canon et cinéma de found footage*, dans Pietro Bianchi, Giulio Bursi, Simone Venturini (sous la dir. de), *Il canone cinematografico/The Film Canon*, Actes du XVII Convegno Internazionale di Studi sul Cinema/International Film Studies Conference (Udine, 16-18 marzo 2010), Forum, Udine 2011, pp. 71-77.

[8] Sur cet aspect, abordé dans ses enjeux essentiellement rythmiques, voir Michael Cowan, « Les rythmes du désir filmique chez Gustav Deutsch », dans *Intermédialités*, n° 16, automne 2010, pp. 209-216. Le même numéro de cette revue comprend un dossier visuel réalisé par Deutsch – document sur lequel il conviendra de revenir à une prochaine occasion.

[9] Quartet de *doom jazz* ici convoqué au travers de *Geisterfaust* (Wonder, 2005), leur album réputé le plus abrupt en raison de son minimalisme radical.

[10] Notons que le répertoire de Soap & Skin comporte une chanson précisément intitulée *Thanatos* (sur l'album *Lovetune for Vacuum*, PIAS, 2009).

[11] *Sandow* (William Kennedy Laurie Dickson et William Heise, Edison, 1894).

[12] Dans son article (cit., p. 8), Michele Pierson observe à juste titre que des films tels que *Welt Spiegel Kino* (et, par extension, la série *Film ist.*) ou encore *Decasia* (2002) de Bill Morrison n'auraient pas été concevables dans le contexte archivistique des années 70.

[13] Le docteur Doyen est resté célèbre pour avoir fait immortaliser sur pellicule nombre de ses opérations chirurgicales, parmi lesquelles la fameuse séparation des sœurs siamoises Doodica et Radica en 1902.

[14] Ce dispositif chirurgical se fera justement connaître sous l'appellation de « lit de Doyen ». Sur Doyen, entre médecine et cinématographie, voir l'ouvrage classique de Thierry Lefebvre, *La Chair et le celluloïd. Le cinéma chirurgical du docteur Doyen*, Jean Doyen Éditeur, Brionne 2004.

[15] D'autres indices de continuité, plus ténus, traversent ces images. À titre d'exemple, dans la première image-satellite relevant de la série médicale, un médecin appose un bandeau sur un corps maintenu hors-champ, au-delà du bord inférieur du cadre : bandeau que le docteur Doyen, dans la séquence vertébrale, ôtera du front de sa patiente.

[16] Voir par exemple, typique à cet égard, la séquence de séduction qui, dans le segment « *Eros* », prend place juste après l'ouverture d'un coffre-fort dont la combinaison correspond justement aux quatre

lettres formant le nom du dieu grec de l'Amour. Poussant très loin le principe de répétition/variation, cette séquence crée moins des personnages qu'elle n'explore des *types* (la séductrice, l'homme aux abois) ; elle vise moins une situation qu'un *rituel*, une panoplie de figures imposées, au double registre du gestuel et du mimique.

[17] Pour rappel, Deutsch, après Peter Delpeut, s'est intéressé de fort près au film de *diva*, tout particulièrement dans le cadre du chapitre 11 de *Film ist.*, consacré à l'expression des émotions et passions de cinéma.

[18] Cette proposition fait écho à une remarque qui m'a été adressée, dans le cadre du colloque, par Leonardo Quaresima, que je remercie au passage. Dans le cadre d'une étude consacrée à *Decasia* de Bill Morrison, j'en arrive à des conclusions analogues. Cf. Livio Belloï, *Le Film comme tombeau. Composition, décomposition et reprises dans l'œuvre de Bill Morrison*, dans Jean-Jacques Chardin (sous la dir. de), *The Déjà-vu and the Authentic : Reprise, Recycling, Recuperating in Anglophone Literature and Culture*, Actes du colloque de Strasbourg (12-13 mars 2010), Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle Upon Tyne 2011 (à paraître).

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Found Footage Films and the *Lumpensammlers* of Memory

The aim of this paper is to try and establish a connection between the cinematic practice of *found footage film*, consisting in reusing and re-editing archival images, and Walter Benjamin's remarks on historical knowledge, with particular reference to the ones in the "*N*" section of his *The Arcades Project* and in *Theses on the Philosophy of History*.[1] The intent is not to confine the great heterogeneity of this cinematic practice to a mere, reductive classification, but rather to see how several *found footage film* authors, when dealing with the "memory" question, tend to deal with it somehow within that Benjaminian sensibility, which we know is strictly connected to the subject of image and the issue of discontinuity.

In the first part, I will provide a general picture of this relationship; in the second part, I will focus on three specific paradigms that I found to be crucial to that relationship.

Walter Benjamin and Found Footage Films

In his *The Arcades Project* Walter Benjamin explains what he means by *historical* knowledge: "[t]he first stage [...] will be to carry over the principle of montage into history; [...] to assemble large-scale constructions out of the smallest and most precisely cut components. [...] And, therefore, to break with vulgar historical naturalism."[2] Thus, in Benjamin's words, historical knowledge "[...] has to develop to the highest degree the art of citing without quotation. [...] Its theory is intimately related to that of montage."[3]

These two simple quotes clearly show how history, for Benjamin, is necessarily intertwined with an editing practice, through which we can handle the relationship between a reminiscent present (the moment of memory) and a gone past (Benjamin's *what-has-been*). Some more quotations from *The Arcades Project* can help us delve deeper into the matter: "In order for a part of the past to be touched by the present instant, there must be no continuity between them."[4] "To write history thus means to cite history. It belongs to the concept of citation, however, that the historical object in each case is torn from its context."[5]

It's about breaking the *continuum* of history: Benjamin states his position against an historical perspective and explains the modalities by which we can access past, in terms of destruction, present-time and citation. Therefore, the past is not given to the individual in its entirety, but only through a series of fragments perceived as a discontinuous succession of shocks, a broken sequence of dialectical images, which Benjamin defines as "image[s] that [emerge] suddenly,"[6] images "wherein what has been comes together in a flash with the now to form a constellation."[7] Thus, the flux of time, far from having a linear construction, crystallizes into images that live inside an actual "temporal differential," in a ceaseless and dialectical coming and going between the present and the past, between present-time and memory, towards a form of knowledge that abandons the linear progression and enhances shocks and rifts (quoting Benjamin again, "knowledge comes only in lightning flashes").[8] A knowledge, then, which finds its place in thresholds, intervals, gaps.

Accessing the past in terms of destruction and citation seems to be the key question, from which we can possibly try and establish a parallelism between Benjamin's sensibility and the cinematic practice of *found footage film*. As a matter of fact, these films are often composed of "recycled" material and can be considered as historical objects, "fixed" memories producing historical knowledge, and they shouldn't be confined to the so-called experimental or documentary cinema: rather, they should be conceived by paying special attention to the modalities by which the individual relates to his own (or someone else's) past. For instance, we can take the greatest *found footage film* project of recent years, *Histoire(s) du cinéma* by Jean-Luc Godard. This is a huge and complex audiovisual project, where the individual memory (of the author as a film-maker and especially as a man) faces and joins collective memory. We can find this very same connection in another *found footage film*, perhaps not as well-known but certainly equally relevant: *23rd Psalm Branch* (1967) by Stan Brakhage.

Here, the collective element is the Vietnam war, which in Brakhage only emerges indirectly through the images of the Holocaust, and the individual element lies in the author's own experience: his trip around Europe, to Kubelka's Vienna, images of his family, his country, and so forth. The individual and the collective element alternate, trying to retrieve something, but in a way that goes well beyond the simple "yes, I remember," as this is an actual ethical need, causing a sense of disorientation and shock; that creates a temporal polyrhythm, stressed even further by the unceasing pulse of images, that is, the so-called *flicker*, flashes of black leader and intervals between the frames.

As a matter of fact, this issue of a relationship between collective and individual memory is a key point in Benjamin's work as well (see his pages on Proust). As he pointed out in his *On Some Motifs in Baudelaire*: "[w]here experience prevails in a strict sense, certain contents of the individual's past meet in memory with the contents of a collective past."[9]

Hence, *found footage films* are fixed memories that manage to condense, into heterogeneous instants, the dialectical modality of an actual historical knowledge, between a reminiscent present and a past torn from its original context (as Benjamin observes in his *Arcades Project*, "The facts become something that just now first happened to us").[10] The issue of accessing the past is "solved" through the montage, in the never exhaustive attempt to connect a reminiscent present to a past which is not approachable in its purity and objectivity, but only as a fact in motion (a tension).

There's no history if not related to the present, namely, the *now-time* that Benjamin calls *Jetztzeit*. History decays into images, not into stories.[11]

Thus, in *found footage films* we have an actual montage of heterogeneous times, so that *what-has-been* (or, in this case, *what-has-been-shot*) unceasingly joins the present act of memory. What we're dealing with is not the creation of a diegetically closed and "working" universe, but rather the tension creating that unceasing movement *between* images, the interval that keeps them together and apart at the same time. The notion of interval and the sensitivity to this matter are therefore crucial, not only because interval is directly involved in montage (Vertov defines it as "the transition from one movement to another"),[12] but also because it's implicated in the very same processes of knowledge. It is this polarized and differential logic that explains the dialectical movement Benjamin referred to when he was talking about the true image of the past that "flashes"[13] – and it's only within this logic that we can possibly consider intervals as the driving force behind a knowledge which takes textual coherence to the limit. All this generates an intervallic and *breathing* movement, through which *what-has-been* (or *what-has-been-shot*) hits us "as a flash," beyond its diegetically functional and empathic role (that only demands identification processes).

According to Benjamin: "It is important for the materialistic historian, in the most rigorous way possible, to differentiate the construction of a historical state of affairs from what one customarily calls its 'reconstruction'. The 'reconstruction' in empathy is one-dimensional. 'Construction' presupposes 'destruction'."[14]

Every *found footage film* alternates moments, details, fleeting images, almost as a marked and discontinuous sequence of freeze frames: it's exactly this attention to detail that reduces images to rubble and fragments, that isolates them by shutting them out from the flux of diegetic vision, and then lets them in again through a dialectical process, namely, montage. What is a montage film if not a work with rubble (*found* filmstrips), with waste material and fragments of history (of cinema, but also of a "life")? They carry elements and sudden images that are not artistic yet, as they're taken before the compositional process that makes them significant.

The Three Paradigms

I will now consider the three paradigms through which we can read the practice of *found footage film*, according to Benjamin's ideas: the idea of origin as a vortex, the ragman figure, the subject of childhood.

I was inspired by Georges Didi-Huberman's remarks in his book *Histoire de l'art et anachronisme des images*. I will present the paradigms by focusing on some specific examples.

Origin as a Vortex

As Benjamin has repeatedly stressed, in order to deal with the historical issue, it is crucial to clarify the question of origin:

> *Origin – he points out – has nothing to do with genesis, [...] the term origin is not intended to describe the process by which the existent came into being, but rather to describe that which emerges from the process of becoming and disappearance. Origin is an eddy in the stream of becoming, and in its current it swallows the material involved in the process of genesis.*[15]

From a clearly non-historical point of view, the German philosopher sees the issue of the present in a twofold perspective: either the present is a *continuum* with the past, and therefore the question of origin is metaphorically connected to the image of the spring (that is, the root of everything – like the spring of the river), or, on the contrary, the present is in a *discontinuous* relationship with the past, so that the best image is not the one of origin as a spring, but rather as a vortex (an eddy can occur at any point of the river). This origin-vortex model, that breaks with the historical becoming as simple sequence of moments, implies a whirling dimension of time: we don't get to know the past as it actually was, we can only seize memories suddenly, as they flash at a moment of "danger."[16] It's not about establishing cause-and-effect connections between different times in history, as an image becomes "historical" thereafter, that is, only if conceived in a dialectical relationship with the present. This latter aspect leads us directly to *found footage films*.

Montage films confront the man/viewer with *what has been* (or *what-has-been-found*) in terms of a "temporal rift:" there is neither a beginning nor an end, as there is no closed diegesis that needs to be brought to an end; we are always in the middle of an emergence, an emergence of diachronic images. The flow of the vision suddenly opens to interval and discard, leaving the viewer carried by the tide, by a vortex, a shock that breaks with the continuum – of history and diegesis. The past produces itself, suddenly and intensively, like a fall, a shock, a risky junction, a remote montage, as something *already-seen* and *already-lived*. This image of a sudden vortex can also be found as a metaphor in many montage films: for instance, a vortex-like circularity is the main feature of Jurgen Reble's chemical films (*Passion*, for example), but it's also the trace of Brakhage's love for Gertud Stein's "whirling" poetry, or for the *Vorticism* of Ezra Pound – according to whom, "The image is not an idea. It is a radiant node / or cluster; it is what I can, and must perforce, call a VORTEX, from which, and through which, and into which, ideas are constantly rushing."[17]

The Ragman Figure

Benjamin points out the methods of historical knowledge: "Method of this project: [...] the rags, the refuse – these I will not inventory, but allow, in the only way possible, to come into their own: by making use of them."[18] Benjamin's second paradigm associates the figure of the historian with the one of the "ragman of memory," the *Lumpensammler*, who "lives on a pile of rags,"[19] among rubble, waste products and fragments. There is a suggestive image that keeps entering my mind when I think about *found footage film*: it is a picture of Stan Brakhage with a filmstrip sliding through his hands – a filmstrip he had entirely painted, something he often used to do. His hands are stained with color, and on his worktable we can see few ink bottles, a beer mug and a book. This *American ragman*, working on details in and between the frames, recalls another iconographic feature of Benjamin's.

In 1928, Benjamin wrote an essay titled *Neues von Blumen*, a review of *Urformen der Kunst* by Karl Blossfeldt, a book that collects one hundred and twenty photographs of plants from all over the world. A silent collection of images (hence, a montage) that enables an actual visual knowledge, one that, for Benjamin, "makes the one who possess it mute."[20] It is surprising, then, to find out that Brakhage too took a stab at this visual knowledge, that he defined *closed-eye vision*.

In 1981 he made his botanic *found footage film*, *The Garden of Earthly Delights*: he wedged all kinds of alpine greenery into two filmstrips, thus creating a sort of natural archive, a real botanic collection indeed. Didi-Huberman commented on Blossfeldt's book:

> *[...] images get jerky. Their differences come alive, their analogies and contrasts describe a sort of breathless metamorphosis, in a never continuous motion. Each image has somehow become the isolable frame of an experimental film on plant life, a film we could make and watch by hand. This is a way to discover that the 'flip through' contributes to the visual re-editing of things. Here lies the concept of dialectical image.*[21]

And perhaps that experimental film on plant life was actually realized by Brakhage, with *The Garden of Earthly Delights*.

Childhood

The historian is a child playing with the remains of time. The image of childhood keeps Benjamin's view and the *found footage film* practice together. Benjamin observes that "In waste products, [children] recognize the face that the world of things turns directly and solely to them. [...] They do not so much imitate the works of adults as bring together, in the artifact produced in play, materials of widely differing kinds, in a new, intuitive relationship."[22] Here we find all the elements mentioned earlier: the paradigms merge into the figure of the child. The charm of *found footage films* lies in a conception of the image that somehow has something to do with cinema as the *childhood of art*, according to Godard's famous definition ("an art of the present, an art that gives and receives before giving, let us say, the childhood of art").[23] Indeed, montage film can be seen as an aesthetic form strictly connected to childhood: on one side, we have childhood as a figure, which is evident for example in the recurrence, in many montage works, of the child and the themes of birth and origin, as in some works by Stan Brakhage, Peter Tscherkassky, Artavadz Peleshian, Jean-Luc Godard, and also in the simple signature tune by Mario Schifano who, in order to pay homage to the ninetieth anniversary of cinema, makes a child literally "vomit" images. Beside childhood as a figure and as an object of vision, we have childhood as an actual creative modality: the act of playing with time, with matter and materials. The dialectics between heterogeneous times often becomes embodied in the figure of birth (sometimes, even as the actual moment of delivery). This is directly connected to the issue of origin. Stan Brakhage filmed his children's birth (in *Window, water, baby moving* for example), thus creating a personal archive he then used several times in his later works. However, these sequences cannot be considered as a biological or biographical project (like saying: "I'm filming my children's birth, and then I will show you how they grew up, and then [...]"); rather, they convey the need to live an event, in this case, birth, through a coming and going of times and different emotional states such as innocence and growth, present and past, as in what happened with the war in *23rd Psalm Branch*. A delightful description of this dialectics between poles is provided by Brakhage himself, when he explains the alternation, in his film *Thigh Line Lyre Triangular*, of images of birth and images of animals: "What I was seeing at the birth of Neowyn [his son] most clearly [...] were symbolic structures of an animal nature. [...] It was as if something had gotten backed up in my mind so that it could release symbolic terms at me [...] I centered the occasion [of being a father] in my own eyes."[24]

Finally, would it be possible to read *found footage film* in the light of such categories as toy, aphasia, interval – and children's discontinuous perception of time, non-linear and non-progressive as it is completely focused on the present? A child breaks a toy and then puts it back together, – to see its soul, as Baudelaire said – he plays with the remains (therefore, with time), he handles waste materials to add a new "piece" to his collection (Baudelaire believed that "The child sees everything as a novelty; [He] is always drunk").[25] The toy is a child's first introduction to art, and his playing is a propensity for something new. In fact, who can deny that by watching a montage film, not only does it produce an effect of "memory rewriting," it stimulates one to *handle* images?

Clouds, Bombs, Children: 23rd Psalm Branch *by Brakhage*

I'd like to conclude by briefly commenting on a short sequence from *23rd Psalm Branch*, where Brakhage alternates flashing images of clouds he shot during his flight back home and archival images of exploding bombs, thus creating a tension between the present and the past. Then the private element bursts in, as we see Brakhage himself writing a letter to his wife Jane. We're seeing through his very eyes: we see images of children, of trees, of his land, of the feminine sexual organ, thus alluding, once again, to origin and birth.

Notes

[1] Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, Belknap Press, Cambridge 1999; Walter Benjamin, *Theses on the Philosophy of History*, in Id., *Illuminations*, edited and with an introduction by Hannah Arendt, Pimlico, London 1999.

[2] Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, cit, p. 461 [N2,6].

[3] *Idem*, p. 458 [N1,10].

[4] *Idem*, p. 470 [N7,7].

[5] *Idem*, p. 476 [N11,3].

[6] *Idem*, p. 473 [N9,7].

[7] *Idem*, p. 462 [N2a3].

[8] *Idem*, p. 456 [N1,1].

[9] Walter Benjamin, *Selected Writings*, vol. 4 - *1938-1940*, Howard Eiland, Michael W. Jennings (eds.), Harvard Colledge, Harvard 2003, p. 316.

[10] Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, cit. p. 388-389 [K1,2].

[11] See Georges Didi-Huberman, *Storia dell'arte e anacronismo delle immagini*, Bollati Boringhieri, Torino 2007, pp. 99-100.

[12] Annette Michelson, *The Wings of Hypothesis. On Montage and the Theory of the Interval*, in Matthew Teitelbaum (ed.), *Montage and Modern Life: 1919-1942*, MIT Press, Cambridge 1994.

[13] Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, cit. p. 456 [N1,1].

[14] *Idem*, p. 470 [N7,6].

[15] Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, Verso, London 2003, p. 45.

[16] Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, cit. p. 470 [N7,2].

[17] Ezra Pound, *A Memoir of Gaudier-Brzeska*, Penguin Books Ltd, Toronto 1970, p. 92.

[18] Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, cit. p. 460 [N1a8].

[19] Georges Didi-Huberman, *Storia dell'arte e anacronismo delle immagini*, cit., p. 100 (my translation).

[20] Walter Benjamin, *Novità sui fiori*, in Giorgio Agamben (ed.), *Ombre corte. Scritti 1928-1929*, Einaudi, Torino 1993, p. 222 (my translation).

[21] *Idem*, p. 138 (my translation).

[22] Walter Benjamin, *One Way Streets and Other Writings*, Penguin Books Ltd, London 1999, pp. 449-450.

[23] Jean-Luc Godard, *Histoire(s) du cinéma*, vol. 1 - *Toutes les histoires, une histoire seule*, Gallimard-Gaumont, Paris 1998, p. 238 (my translation).

[24] Bruce Elder, *The Films of Stan Brakhage in the American Tradition of Ezra Pound, Gertrude Stein and Charles Olson*, Wilfrid Laurier University Press, Waterloo (Ontario, Canada) 1998, p. 133.

[25] Charles Baudelaire, *The Painter of Modern Life*, in Lawrence Cahoone (ed.), *From Modernism to Postmodernism: an Anthology*, Blackwell Publishing Ltd, Oxford 2003.

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"Que vanité que l'archive." Triple Agent: Rohmer's Archaeology and the Archive Material

In his *The Signature of All Things*,[1] Giorgio Agamben deals with research and method in the human sciences. The term "signature" is taken primarily from Michel Foucault's *The Order of Things*.[2] Similarities, resemblances and likenesses form a secret system of significant correspondences within the visible surface of the world. "Signatures" are not just "signs" in the usual sense that they point to something "out there" and outside themselves, but the special kind of signs that installs significant resemblances *within* the things themselves, in an unmistakably performative way. So it cannot really be called a sign, but rather a "mark" fixing a similarity *within* things rather than from the outside:

> *Would we ever know that there is a relation of twin-ship or rivalry between a man and his planet, if there were no sign upon his body or among the wrinkles on his face that he is an emulator of Mars or akin to Saturn? These buried similitudes must be indicated on the surface of things; there must be visible marks, that is, signatures, for the invisible analogies.*[3]

The signature Agamben himself posits in this book is the one linking Michel Foucault together with Aby Warburg's *Mnemosyne* project, collecting visual connections among countless images scattered along the centuries, and also with Walter Benjamin, whose warburgian linkage is in fact well ascertained. However, the key-moment of Agamben's operation is perhaps when he affirms "that the statements in Foucault's *The Archaeology of Knowledge* take the place that in *The Order of Things* belonged to signatures."[4] *The Order of Things* made it clear that signatures do not belong to the hermeneutics ("the totality of the learning and skills that enable one to make the signs speak and to discover their meaning")[5] nor to the semiotics ("the totality of the learning and skills that enable one to distinguish the location of the signs, to define what constitutes them as signs, and to know how and by what laws they are linked"):[6] resemblances have to be identified and marked in the gap between hermeneutics and semiology. Foucault's *Archaeology of Knowledge*, according to Agamben, relies on this very gap with regard to statements, i.e. the silent presuppositions rendering operative so-called "discursive practices," that is, "a body of anonymous, historical rules, always determined in the time and space that have defined a given period, and for a given social, economic, geographical, or linguistic area, the conditions of operation of the enunciative function."[7] One should not "look for the statement among unitary groups of signs. The statement is neither a *syntagma*, nor a rule of construction, nor a canonic form of succession and permutation; it is that which enables such groups of signs to exist, and enables these rules or forms to become manifest."[8] Statements are then firmly distinguished from the semiotic sphere, but also from the semantic since they are neither sentences nor propositions:

> *Statements, then, are situated on the threshold between semiology and hermeneutics where signatures take place. Neither semiotic nor semantic, not yet discourse and no longer mere sign, statements, like signatures, do not institute semiotic relations or create new meanings; instead, they mark and "characterize" signs at the level of their existence, thus actualizing and displacing their efficacy. These are the signatures that signs receive from the sheer fact of existing and being used – namely, the indelible character that, in marking them as signifying something, orients and determines their interpretation and efficacy in a certain context.*[9]

Statements, as well as signatures, are not signs of any kind, but they are "a function of existence"[10] of signs and of anything signs construct (sentences, propositions and the like).

This is why archaeology aims "to question language, not in the direction to which it refers, but in the dimension that gives it."[11] Statements and signatures do not strictly pertain to language, but to the "other side" of language, to its conditions of possibility, that is, to language's existence as such.

The site for this "reverse side" is distinctively *the archive*:

> *The archive is first of all the law of what can be said, the system that governs the appearance of statements as unique events. [...] The archive is not that which, despite its immediate escape, safeguards the event of the statement, and preserves, for future memories, its status as an escapee; it is that which, at the very root of the statement-event, and in that which embodies it, defines at the outset the system of its enunciability. [...] It is that which defines the mode of occurrence of the statement-thing; it is the system of its functioning.*[12]

We will get back to archive only in the final and crucial part of this paper.

The final image of Eric Rohmer's first feature film is a camera movement connecting the surface of a Parisian street with a nocturnal view of the sky above it. The tiny reflections of light on the former resemble the stars cramming the latter. The visual correspondence between the reflections on the asphalt and the stars in the sky is a perfect signature. Besides, astrology, one of the domains of signatures according to both Agamben and Foucault, is also recalled by the title of that film, *The Sign of Leo* (*Le Signe du lion*, 1959).

Eventually, Rohmer made three period dramas[13] attempting to investigate a certain historical era through the art forms of that specific time (painting, literature, architecture and so on). *Triple Agent* (2004) is a period drama about the Thirties, thus it must deal with the quintessential art form of the 20th Century: cinema. Hence the use of archive footage punctuating the film throughout. Cinema does not meet the other arts this time, but it meets itself. The point lies no longer in illustrating the hidden spirit of a specific historical era through its own art forms, as the well-known Rohmerian metaphysical idealism used to prescribe. Something different is at stake now.

It is a semi-fictional tale, set between 1937 and 1939, about Fëdor, a former Russian czarist general working as a spy for an organization based in Paris gathering the "white Russians" in exile who escaped from the

Bolsheviks, and his Greek wife Arsinoé, a painter. Fëdor is a subtle and brilliant spy – at a certain point, it even seems that the destiny of about any European nation is or can be in his hands. Nevertheless, he falls victim of an international plot, and he winds up unintentionally contributing to have his own boss kidnapped. As a result, he disappears and probably gets killed, while his wife dies in jail.

From the very first scenes, it is very clear that Fëdor is "the Word," and Arsinoé is "the Image." Political and geo-political discussions between very talkative Fëdor and other people in the film often turn out to be monologues in which the spy exposes with perfect clarity and in detail the situation. Despite of his cleverness, he falls into the enemy's trap because he had to change the place of the meeting between his boss and the people who would eventually reveal themselves as kidnappers; the reasons behind this change are absurdly banal: he had to take his wife to a tailor nearby. This is more than enough to make him look guilty, although he had really no intentional role in the kidnapping. Generally speaking, this demonstrates that language, penetrating and subtle as it might be, cannot reach, grasp and control everything. There is something it is doomed to miss, and this is its own "reverse side," i.e. itself as an ontological fact. Fëdor, i.e. language, is defeated by himself, that is, by his intimate other side, i.e. his wife, the image. Indicatively, *Triple Agent* shows Fëdor thrice while standing before a mirror showing the back of his neck. Language cannot take into account, nor control, its own reverse side. Fëdor lets his boss be kidnapped right before his own eyes: he lets himself be duped by *evidence* itself. The banal, exterior appearance of things eludes his consummate intellectual grasp.

As for the Image, Arsinoé states that her paintings do not really reproduce life in the streets, she prefers to quickly sketch distinct subjects outdoor in order to modify and compose them at home as a montage on canvas. They depict ordinary scenes from daily life: a crowded marketplace, the close-up of a child… They can be easily defined "realist" paintings – not because they "copy" reality *en plein air* but (as the dialogues insist repeatedly on) because they "express" the model's inwardness. A concept of painting definitely far from her communist neighbors', in love with Picasso and Cubism. Arsinoé does not like nor understand Picasso, and nor did Rohmer in 1951 when he wrote *Such Vanity is Painting*, an article against pictorial modernism and everything for which form was preponderant over the self-eloquence of what exists. "In the past, Cézanne, Picasso or Matisse gave us new eyes to see the world. *Such Vanity is Painting,* which has given up telling the world to exist according to its laws. But the truth is that things are as they are, regardless of how we see them."[14]

So we are still fully inside the usual Rohmerian idealist metaphysics of the appearance, for which the image is the contact point between the visible and the invisible, the sensible manifestation of the essence of phenomena. The point is that the film no longer shares this notion of the image. Arsinoé ends up as badly as Fëdor. Sixty years ago, Rohmer wrote "show a child a Picasso painting: he will recognize a face that an adult will have trouble seeing. But show him an older painting, and he will like it better."[15] Fifty-three years later, Rohmer tellingly includes in his film a scene where a little child visits Arsinoé's atelier, and when asked "What do you see in this picture?" facing an ordinary, representative painting, the child just remains silent. The painting does not express nor reveal anything. The notion of expression, of visible revelation of the invisible, is now drastically eliminated. In other words, all that concerns the *origin* in the broader sense is canceled. This makes Rohmer unexpectedly closer to Foucauldian approach, which "rejects the metahistorical deployment of ideal significations and indefinite teleologies. It opposes itself to the search for 'origins,'"[16] i.e. "the exact essence of things, their purest possibilities, and their carefully protected identities; because this search assumes the existence of immobile forms that precede the external world of accident and succession."[17]

Foucault's archaeology is not after what vertically and genetically determines another phenomenon "before" and "behind" it; it rather focuses on the point that Agamben calls "arising." Such term names "the revelation of the present as something that we were not able to live or think,"[18] the moment when a certain historical phenomenon comes to exist *as historical*, and therefore is split in two by its own historical existence. While the origin merely separates an untouchable past and a present, the arising sees them *together* as simultaneous. "Not only memory, as in Bergson, but also forgetfulness, are contemporaneous with perception and the present. While we perceive something, we simultaneously remember and forget it."[19] So he concludes, with Cathy Caruth, "that a history can be grasped only in the very inaccessibility of its occurrence."[20] By the fact itself that it comes into being, the historical phenomenon generates a sort of parallel latency.

Triple Agent is wholly structured on this "self-concealment" that the historical phenomenon brings along with its own existing as such. It is a paradox that recurs very often throughout the film. The first proper dialogue is about the fact that the communist revolution in France is self-impeded, i.e. is forbidden by Russian Bolsheviks themselves. And it is Léon Blum's leftist government that blocks the workers' strikes. The political revolution blocks aesthetic revolution (that is, modernist painters forbidden in Russia), whereas in the West aesthetic revolution blocks political revolution.

Fëdor is ultimately duped by its own ability, and his boss's kidnapping is only there to mask a bigger forthcoming turmoil – that is, as he himself says, "the tree hiding the forest." At the end, Fëdor manages to escape from his inquisitors because one of them, while going out of the office to go to the police with him, goes back to his other colleague's room to tell him that yes, Fëdor necessarily had to be guilty; in other words, as Fëdor himself put it, it is the absolute certitude of his guilt that let him escape.

All this is really nothing new: Pascal Bonitzer has convincingly demonstrated in his monograph[21] that in all of his six *Moral Tales* adultery is an appearance self-concealing its false depth. And the notorious, incomplete quotation of Fuseli's *Nightmare* (1781) in *Die Marquise von O…*, lacking precisely the monstrous nightmare in the otherwise perfect reproduction of that painting, signals a fundamental absence; in other words, it is *an overtly revealed concealment*. This famous ellipsis is back in *Triple Agent*: during the sixty-seventy minutes while Arsinoé waits for her dress, elsewhere Fëdor's boss is kidnapped thanks to his own unintentional complicity, and a *closing-opening iris* takes this period of time away from the film, while at the same time manifesting patently that an *ellipsis was made*. Again, the film shows the fact itself that it is hiding something, notably the single most important event of the plot.

And here finally comes the archive footage. Because it is the most traumatic occurrence of this strange paradox of the evidence hiding itself, it is placed right before the end – and it is none other than the *Molotov-Ribbentrop pact*. A deal manifesting evidently that its own evidence was a false one, and that the two opponents had no intentions to keep the promised peace. The images of that German-Russian agreement are the perfect signature for all the abundant archive footage included throughout the film, in that all of it generically points at something exceeding the single facts visualized. In other words, all of this footage signals that there is more than just the information transmitted by the images (strikes in Paris, war in Spain, the world Expo…), there is more than just the signs, and that is the sheer level of their existence, which is irreducible to the sign. We no more have the sense of History expressed by this or that art form belonging to a certain era, like in Rohmer's other period dramas, but we have instead the archive images, revealing nothing more than the empty fact that something beyond the communicational, linguistic level is pressing on the signs, as it were. They reveal nothing more than the fact itself that they appear. The image is no longer the visible expression of the invisible, like in Arsinoé's paintings: through the archive, "the system of signatures reverses the relation of the visible to the invisible."[22] Rohmer's supposed essentialist and idealist approach is now closer to Foucauldian archaeology, since the use of the archive materials

> *[…] dissipates that temporal identity in which we are pleased to look at ourselves when we wish to exorcise the discontinuities of history; it breaks the thread of transcendental teleologies; and where anthropological thought once questioned man's being or subjectivity, it now bursts open the other, and the outside. In this sense, the diagnosis does not establish the fact of our identity by the play of distinctions. It establishes that we are difference.*[23]

This is precisely what *Triple Agent* does: it builds up the story of Fëdor, an immensely talented individual seemingly capable to pull the strings of the world, only to deny it, both in the content by making him a victim of a bigger plot, and formally by interrupting regularly his tale with the archive footage setting difference preponderant again over the identity fixed by the power of language and signs. The archive footage – as well as the reiterated, almost Kubrickian emphasis put by Rohmer on the exactness of the copies of the newspapers from back then (especially *L'Humanité*) – are there to embody what Foucault calls an historical *a priori*:

> *An* a priori *that is not a condition of validity for judgments, but a condition of reality for statements. [...] Moreover, this a priori does not elude historicity: it does not constitute, above events, and in an unmoving heaven, an atemporal structure; it is defined as the group of rules that characterize a discursive practice: but these rules are not imposed from the outside on the elements that they relate together; they are caught up in the very things that they connect.*[24]

If the *a priori* of the historical period illustrated by *Triple Agent*, as experienced by Fëdor, is the relentless, anonymous exteriority of historical phenomena, it is also historical, since the newsreels from the Thirties punctuating the film throughout show this *a priori* literally along with historical phenomena themselves. This is especially true for the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, the perfect historical manifestation of that sheer, blind exteriority.

Triple Agent shows that historical phenomena are less controllable by the subject and more self-imposing despite their mere appearing anonymously as true. And, following Agamben recognizing in both Foucault and Benjamin the idea that archaeological research is a bipolar tension between past and present, this has much to do with our contemporary era, as suggested in the film by a sardonic reversal of *The Sign of Leo's* final signature, a downward camera movement connects a religious statue and a radio; in other words, media are the new all-embracing totality, the new God.

Notes

[1] Giorgio Agamben, *The Signature of All Things: On Method* [*Signatura Rerum: sul metodo*, Bollati Boringhieri, Torino 2008], Zone Books, New York 2009.

[2] Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* [*Les Mots et les choses*, Gallimard, Paris 1966], Routledge Classics, London-New York 2002.

[3] *Idem*, p. 29.

[4] Giorgio Agamben, *The Signature of All Things*, cit., p. 64.

[5] Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*, cit., p. 33.

[6] *Ibidem*.

[7] Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* [*L'Archeologie du savoir*, Gallimard, Paris 1969], Routledge Classics, London-New York 2002, p. 131.

[8] *Idem*, p. 99.

[9] Giorgio Agamben, *The Signature of All Things*, cit., p. 64.

[10] Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, cit., p. 97.

[11] *Idem*, p. 125.

[12] *Idem*, pp. 145-146.

[13] *The Marquise of O.* (*Die Marquise von O…*, 1976), *Perceval* (*Perceval le Gallois*, 1978), *The Lady and the Duke* (*L'Anglaise et le duc*, 2001).

[14] Eric Rohmer, *Such Vanity is Painting*, in Jean Narboni (ed.), *The Taste for Beauty* [*Le goût de la beauté*, Editions Cahiers du Cinéma, Paris 1984], Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1989, p. 44.

[15] *Ibidem*.

[16] Michel Foucault, *Nietzsche, Genealogy, History*, in James D. Faubion (ed.), *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*, New Press, New York 1998, p. 370.

[17] *Idem*, p. 371.

[18] Giorgio Agamben, *The Signature of All Things*, cit., p. 99.

[19] *Idem*, p. 101.

[20] *Ibidem*.

[21] Pascal Bonitzer, *Eric Rohmer*, Editions Cahiers du Cinéma, Paris 1991.

[22] Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*, cit., p. 30.

[23] Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, cit., p. 103.

[24] *Idem*, pp. 99-100.

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